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THE
IMPERIAL
AUTHORITY
OF
TITUS
FLAVIUS

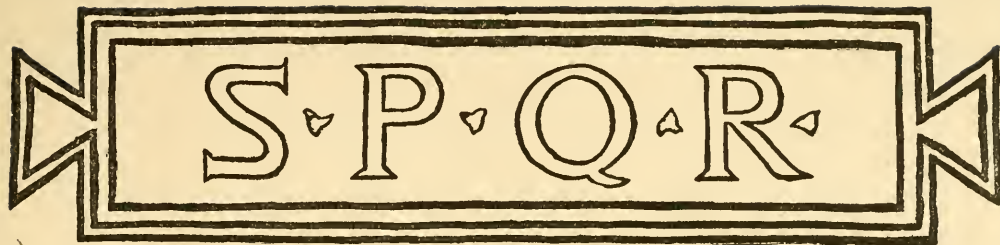




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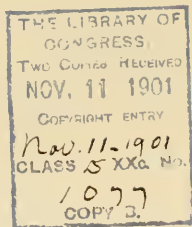
A METRICAL DRAMA
OF AN ATTEMPT UPON
THE
IMPERIAL AUTHORITY
OF
TITUS FLAVIUS
ELEVENTH CÆSAR
WITH THE TRAGIC FATE OF
CASCA LENTULUS
AND THE
UNHAPPY CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS
ACCUSSION AGAINST
THE EMPRESS LIVIA

BY
ACHIM TCHODJK
FIRST EDITION



NEW YORK
RAVENWOOD & RUTLAND
23RD ST. & LEXINGTON AVE.
1901.

P23539
CGMA
1901



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YARRALL
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Drama

To my father.

PROLOGUE.

Upon the great, wide cloth of History,
So surely rolling from the looms of Time;
So laced with life and death and mystery,
Shall condemnation fall if with a rhyme,
Upon a long forgotten spot, we try
To 'broider in sweet Fancy's silken skeins,
To weave a pattern that shall never die,
A deft design where love forever reigns?
But lest the grim historian be wroth,
For him the play-bill bears a line or two,
That he may pick from out the threads of cloth,
The gold brocade, the purple and the blue.
Good friends, with these apologies we ask,
Your kindly favor for both mime and mask.

APOLOGY.

Descriptive convenience may warrant the employment of the term "unity piece" as a designation for this play, for in its construction the dramatic unities are attempted, the action being entire and taking place upon a single scene within a space of time equivalent to that which would have been occupied by its occurrence in reality.

The minor unities of time and place are complete, which can scarcely be said of any known English play of considerable length. Some centuries ago, the ridiculous contention was made in France that these unities were observed when the scenes of a play were contained within the walls of a building and the elapsed time did not exceed twenty four hours. These bounds, however, proved too galling and it presently became permissible for the scenes to dispose themselves anywhere within the city limits, while the time allowance was increased to thirty hours.

But is this not the other extreme? Is it possible to observe the unity of place at a distance greater than two miles and three furlongs from the city hall? Does not the unity of time demand the denouement within twenty seven hours and fifteen minutes? These are parlous questions.

In availing themselves of these licenses the English dramatists have surrendered the real unity, for in a play in which the scene is shifted, if only to the next room, or the curtain dropped, if for but a moment, the effect of continuity is certainly lost. Indeed, with the curtain once down the modern mind demands a complete change of scene and the supposed passage of no small space of time, for if further incidents are to occur on the same scene or within a brief time it argues want of skill in not including them when the scene was open. Any approximation of these two unities has, therefore, an inartistic effect.

As for the first and far more important unity, that of action; the elusive element of plot, the essential quality of poetry, the inner significance which commands immortality, the virtue

often undreamed of by the temporary and prolific playwright, the very rock of the theatre; it is appropriate to say no more than that though this action may be deemed hurried and involved, the greater unity has been attempted; with what success time alone can determine.

An attempt at complete unity is not open to criticism for; as the supreme expression of the human race is in poetry and the height of poetry is reached in the tragic drama; that execution which embodies the important effect of continuity certainly can not be inferior to a disconnected treatment. Ridicule may be invited by the disparity between desire and ability but the integrity and appositeness of the desire can not be questioned.

A certain freedom has been gained; at the sacrifice of regularity; by the mechanical arrangement of the iambics of the speeches into lines of lengths dictated by the thought to be conveyed, the typographical appearance or the vocal requirements of a reader. A justification of this "symmetric lining," as well as of the division of an iambic between speeches, the use of three syllables in a foot and the transposition of the long and short syllables, is to be found in "The Science of English Verse," by Sidney Lanier, an admirable exposition of the fundamental principles of versification. Although the beauties of the pentametric line be foregone, that broader and more subtle rhythm of style, of which no analysis seems yet to have been made, the hidden rhythm of prose, is not only not surrendered, but is more clearly brought out, for the effect of this method of lining is to facilitate the appreciation of the printed page by decreasing the labor of reading.

Few historical liberties have been taken and the relations between the historical personages are such as are supposed to have existed. The relations between the historical and the invented characters and the incidents arising therefrom are, of course, fictitious; though not improbable.

The action is divided into five parts, analogous to acts, by the second soliloquy of Casca, the first and second soliloquies of Juvenal and the accession of Titus.

NEW YORK CITY,
September, 1901.

ACHIM TCHODJK.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

Given in the order of their appearance on the scene.

<i>NAMES.</i>	<i>RELATIONS.</i>	<i>LINES.</i>	<i>AGES.</i>
*AULUS CÆCINA, a Roman General.		160	60
*DOMITIAN, afterward the 12th., and last Cæsar.		20	25
TRANQUILLIUS, a boy, slave to Titus.		37	14
*PLINY, the younger, friend of Tacitus.		122	18
CASCA, half-brother to Livia.		395	22
*TACITUS, the historian, friend of Pliny.		118	28
NARCISSA, friend to Livia.		126	18
LUCIA, a young girl, slave to Livia.		19	14
LIVIA, wife of Titus.		359	25
*TITUS, the 11th., Cæsar.		345	39
KLABO, chief slave of the Imperial Palace.		5	50
HYPOKRATES, a Grecian astrologer.		101	80
*PLOTINA, wife of Trajan.		13	27
*GAUDENTIUS, architect of the Colosseum.		39	50
MARTHA, wife of Gaudentius.		11	45
*BERENICE, wife of Herod and Queen of Cilicia.		184	50
VARRO, a disloyal soldier.		58	30
*JUVENAL, the satirist.		206	60
MONIDES, archer to Juvenal.			40
*APICIUS, a glutton.		74	44
*VESPASIAN, Emperor of Rome, 10th., Cæsar.		38	69
*JULIA, wife of Tacitus.		3	22
GALLUS,	} conspirators.	5	35
DEMETRIUS,		8	50
GRACCUS,		1	28
*TRAJAN, afterward 14th., Emperor of Rome.		62	28
SEXTUS, a loyal soldier.		78	40
FIRST PLEBIAN,	} leaders of the mob.	3	20
SECOND PLEBIAN,		6	50
THIRD PLEBIAN,		14	90
		<hr/> 2616	

Various SOLDIERS and SLAVES and a MOB.

*Known to have existed.

†Believed to have existed.

The Imperial Authority of Titus Flavius.

PLACE:—ROME.

YEAR:—79 A. D.

SCENE:—An atrium in the IMPERIAL PALACE OF VESPASIAN. Beyond a colonnade the city is seen on distant hills. In the centre of the scene, somewhat elevated, is the impluvium; a large, round pool of water within a broad stone wall, slightly above the coping of which project the low-oval tops of its six massive equidistant posts. From the panels of the wall between the posts extend stone ledges or seats, with arms, and supporting brackets standing forward, at the ends, upon the flagstone floor. Behind the impluvium; to the right,* flanked by columns; is a wide opening; through the stylobate supporting these and the others of the inner row of colonnade columns; into the corridor, a step higher, running entirely across the rear. Besides the corridor entrances there are two others on each side, below the stylobate. The middle entrances are curtained; the tapestry of the one on the right being drawn, while that of the one on the left is thrown over an immense jar, standing between the entrance and the stylobate. To the right and left of the impluvium, somewhat forward, are two low, small round-tables, from each of which three broad couches radiate.

TIME:—The action extends from the middle of a changeable and stormy Spring afternoon to sunset.

* The directions "right" and "left" are taken regarding the auditorium, and that portion of the scene nearest the auditorium is herein designated by the words "front", "down", "lower", "forward" and "below"; the antonyms of which are applied to the portion furthest removed; the intervening space being referred to by the words "middle" and "centre", strictly used.

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AULUS CAECINA:

The first speaker, being discovered below the impluvium by the rising curtains, takes a scroll from his breast, and presently says to himself, as he unrolls it with deliberation:

Could resolution unallied prevail against
The charging foes of circumstance;
Could resolution drive them back upon their dark retreats,
And sweep the fields of battle clear;
I would not ask for your uncertain aid,
My wrangling and suspicious friends! *He jerks the scroll angrily.*
'Tis bitter that my triumph I must share with thee,
But grateful is the thought that should the veiled hour,
Bring forth misfortune and defeat,
The most respected names in Rome will grace my fall.

He strikes the paper, when, hearing footsteps, he tries to replace it, without success. In alarm he conceals himself below middle right. DOMITIAN enters, upper right, and advances in meditation, counting on his fingers. He discovers TRANQUILLIUS following in mimicry and waves him out, when he is presently further disturbed by the sounds of voices on the left,

DOMITIAN.

With., lync. A poet's solitude, it doth appear,
Is never sacred to the chatterbox! *Exit, lower left. Enter, upper left, PLINY, followed by CASCA. AULUS envelopes himself in the tapestry.*

PLINY.

No more! No more! I'll hear no more! *Passing through the stylobate opening PLINY turns to CASCA and they gradually move forward.*
Thy foul and bloody purpose chills my veins!

CASCA.

We are in Cæsar's house, my friend!
They say the sense of hearing doth pertain
To curtains, jars and even columns here,
That secret passageways do burrow in these rocky hills,
Deep down to silent pits and gloomy caverns, down
20 To the very jaws of Night herself.

PLINY.

Already, Casca, fearful of the spoken word;
How wilt thou shake when thou hast laid

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

3

The Flavians in their reeking tombs,
And swarms of emperors from every camp,
Spring up to claim the throne, and with their veteran legions
Hurry here to Rome from Dacia, Britain, Egypt, Gaul;
On war and bloody mischief bent?

CASCA.

The fire of my ambition, bold,
Will scorch and wither up these green, pretending fools.
30 Ah, Pliny, when the fateful hour doth come;
I'll loose such thunderbolts of battle and of wrath,
That down the limitless extent of Time's long aisles,
Their echoes shall forever roll.

Enter TACITUS, upper left, his manner showing that he has been a party to the conversation.

TACITUS.

And shall forever echo you a traitor and a thief.

CASCA.

I have as good a right--- *[Dashes in this manner indicate the breaking in of the speech following.]*

TACITUS.

What right have you?

CASCA.

What right has he?

TACITUS.

The right to give us ten years more of peace,
Of happiness, of harvest wealth, of heavy laden vines!

CASCA.

40 The grapes upon the vine,
Shall they decay and wither when the diadem of Rome
Adorns these destined, fateful brows?

PLINY.

O mad, devoted senator!
O blind and fevered fool!
To what obscure and distant corner
Hath thy reason flown,

4 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

That thou wouldst dare this dizzy height
Of Roman grandeur, frowning in the clouds?
Hath the scepter of the empire,
50 Trembled yet, in old Vespasian's hands?
That venerable, firm and well belovéd man first bars your way.

CASCA.

A log; decayed and, Pliny, crumbling; soon removed.

PLINY.

Then stands the mighty oak, my friend and yours,
Strong Titus; he who battered down Jerusalem's walls,
And devastated all the slopes of Palestine;
Think you to measure swords with him?

CASCA.

He saved himself a Jewish queen,
And she hath dulled his edge, whilst their debaucheries
Have filled the Roman heart with dread; they see in him,
60 A second Nero! Titus doth deserve their hate!
Tiberius, the bloody, 's born again; and vile Caligula,
Reanimate doth walk, when Titus rises from his couch!

PLINY.

Stop! Casca, stop! You know that Berenice lives
In banishment from Rome;
Sent out as Julius Cæsar sent dark Egypt's queen;
And it becomes you not, to thus revive old scandals, Casca;
When the gentle Titus, all mankind's delight;
Who never lets a day go by without a favor done;
When Titus now hath made your sister Livia his honored wife.

CASCA.

70 His honored wife!
Oh Pliny! Livia was a vestal pure, until,
By magic Grecian arts he won her from her sacred character:
The punishment which ages have decreed against her crime,
Is living burial there beyond the north Collinian gate.
When he is tired of her; and does he not,
Already, keep her hidden weeks and months away;

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

5

This doom will end my sister's joy.

PLINY.

When Titus proves himself so base, your hour will then be come;
And Pliny, Flavian admirer that he is, will join your cause.
Till then forbear, for even should you hack this oak to earth,
The younger brother, sly Domitian; timid, crafty, fell Domitian,
He who hides beneath the poet's cloak his wolfish nature,
83 He, will strike you from behind.

CASCA.

Domitian's days are dropping,
Like the petals of a rose-bud eaten by a worm.

TACITUS.

In plainer words you've hired his murderers. *CASCA objects.*
Will you, yourself, despatch him?

PLINY.

Casca! Thou, a murderer!
Come, clip thy mad Ambition's wings,
90 And be not tempted to this fearful flight.
The cup of pomp and power,
The intoxicating cup of rule and domination,
Cast from thy eager lips, away;

The draught is death! *From time to time TACITUS writes on a wax tablet, making dots with great rapidity. (The Roman shorthand is said to have consisted of series of points in varying relations.) The sounds of footsteps on the flagstone floor are heard.*

A treasure worth far more to thee,
Than Cæsar's purple or his gold: Narcissa comes.

Enter upper right NARCISSA, presently followed by LUCIA, who is carrying a basket of flowers. Exeunt both, upper left without having seen the others, who are down right.

CASCA.

Did I love her as she loves me.... *[Successive periods indicate silence.]*
My life long dreams have been of glory, not of love.

TACITUS.

Do dreams of justice never trouble you?

CASCA.

100

The Roman law forbids the union of

6 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

A bondman's daughter with such blood as mine.

PLINY.

Her father rose to freedom,
She, outshines the noblest ladies of the court;
She lives within your sister's sweet regard,
She hath the emperor's respect despite her unwise love for you;
Remove this stain upon your honor,
Ere Vespasian's willingness to change the law,
Is murdered by your stubborn mood.

CASCA.

109 Did you persuade me to the other course,
Already had I set me on the throne with you for ministers.

PLINY.

Oh! Casca, look! Oh, look where Livia comes!
The charm of dignity in every movement lies,
She hath the fascination of immortal loveliness....

Enter upper right, LIVIA. She passes across, unconscious of the presence of the others on the scene.

How like a gentle breath she moves along the corridor,
How like a dream her presence makes
The cold and gloomy hallways of this palace seem....

Exit upper left, LIVIA.

She, Casca, is thy sister;
Hers the eyes to blind with tears and burn,
119 And hers the voice to choke with grief,
And hers the heart to crush beneath thy ruthless heel,
When thou shalt kill Vespasian on his throne,
And lay the noble Titus in his undeservéd tomb!

CASCA.

With Titus dying, who could comfort her as well as thou?

CASCA perceives that TACITUS has been writing in shorthand.

You've copied down our conversation, have you not?

TACITUS

I have.

CASCA.

What purpose you?

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

7

TACITUS.

It is my habit, thus, to cheat Oblivion of her prey;
By this means I preserve the finely polished sentences,
Which drop complete from Pliny's lips.

CASCA.

You then neglected mine.

TACITUS.

Not so, I put them in.

CASCA.

132 Then rub them quickly out.

TACITUS.

I'll let them stay; the contrast would be spoilt.

CASCA.

I wish them out; they're safer out.

TACITUS.

They're safe with me. *TACITUS places the tablet in his breast.*

I'll keep the tablet as an evidence,
Of treason and conspiracy, should I be called upon to testify.

CASCA.

Are you against me sir?

140 The evidence is valueless; whole books of it,
In secret, you could write.

TACITUS.

But this will be supported by the oath of Pliny, here;
A witness not to be despised.

CASCA.

And you against me, where I thought to find,
My chiefest advocate?

PLINY.

I'll never have occasion to substantiate this evidence.

CASCA.

Are you my ally, then?

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PLINY.

Nay, not thy ally but thy friend:
Though Tacitus contents himself with evidence,
Against the possibility of trial; more, much more,
150 Shall I require, to satisfy myself;
So, Casca Lentullus, I warn thee now,
Proceed no further with this dark conspiracy;
Take thou one step and Cæsar takes the next.

CASCA.

Would you betray me, sir?

PLINY.

For nothing less than Rome....

TACITUS.

And now we may discuss more pleasing things.

They start to go out lower right, when NARCISSA enters lower left. CASCA is startled and PLINY bows. TACITUS stands apart.

NARCISSA.

Oh Casca, have you seen a little chicken running hereabout;
A most demure and modest mannered bird.

CASCA.

I see yourself.

NARCISSA.

160 I mean another one; *Enter, lower left, LUCIA.*
She answers to the name of Livia when you cluck.

CASCA.

Ah, Pliny, here can tell you how,
She just now walked along the corridor.

NARCISSA.

Thanks! Thanks! Just how, I care not since I know she did.

Exit NARCISSA, upper left LUCIA sits.

LUCIA.

Some day I think she'll stop.

CASCA.

And why?

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

9

LUCIA.

You know, I think. *Enter LIVIA, lower left.*

CASCA.

Narcissa seeks you. She hath but this moment gone,
In all her wonted restlessness.

LIVIA.

170 Left she no word of why she wanted me?

CASCA.

We had no time to ask ere she was out.

LIVIA.

Narcissa, child! Narcissa, child! *LIVIA calls, upper left, where NARCIS-
SA reenters after LIVIA has concealed herself behind the large
jar, middle left. LUCIA employs herself with the flowers.*

NARCISSA.

Upon my word, my ears heard Livia call me, twice!

CASCA.

But your bright eyes confirm you no such lies.

NARCISSA.

So Titus hath taught you his knack of rhyme making;
Poor fellow, I know your dear head must be aching.

She pats CASCA'S head.

PLINY.

Not so, gentle lady, he spoke from the heart;
For he's deep in your debt; this was payment in part,
For the falsehood he told as you flew like a dart,
180 For his was the voice and his mimic art,
Made Livia's tones from 'twixt his lips start.

NARCISSA.

I do not believe it, so call me once more,
To prove that your throat can such sweetness outpour.

PLINY.

The mellowing touch of separation,
Is required to qualify his tones:
Return then to the corridor and he will speak again.

10 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

NARCISSA.

I'll hear the mimic cry, right where I stand.

CASCA.

Narcissa, child!

PLINY.

189

You see the charm is dead,

We'll go and call you from the statue by the pool.

They move forward and to the right after NARCISSA has kissed CASCA.

LIVIA. *Aside.*

Oh could I change this dull, cold jar to Titus,

What a joy 'twould be, for him and me!

She kisses the jar. NARCISSA thereupon discovers her and quickly joins the group, lower right. Exit LIVIA, cunningly, lower left.

NARCISSA.

Come! Come! I'll show you how the mellowing touch

Of separation is required to qualify his tones;

I'll illustrate the magic of his mimic art;

The secret of his charm hides there; no one but Livia herself.

They examine the place and laugh at NARCISSA.

CASCA.

You say this jar is Livia, herself?

PLINY.

This stone, perhaps; or this one; they may serve,

To illustrate your magic mimic art. *To CASCA.*

LIVIA enters, upper left, demurely.

LIVIA.

200

What interests you so about the jar?

CASCA.

Narcissa claims that you were just now hid behind it;

Or perhaps you were inside.

LIVIA.

How quaint a fancy, that;

To lodge within the precincts of so sensible a head.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

11

NARCISSA.

How quaint a color, that;
To lodge upon the precincts of so red a pair of lips.
How strange! It matches quite an odd, round spot,
Upon this jar.... Oh hypocrites! Most charming hypocrites!
Come tell me now some more about that wondrous,
210 Mellowing touch of separation, Words in which the letters are somewhat separated are to be emphasized.
That peculiar mimic art of thine.
What is't I hear?.... Good friends, who's bit whose tongue?
Lucia, dear! Exeunt PLINY, TACITUS and CASCA, lower right. NARCISSA whispers to LUCIA. LIVIA sits.

LIVIA.

Was that quite fair?

NARCISSA.

It was not quite as fair as hiding when we'd made for thee,
A holm oak wreath; and woven it with wild flowers rare;
Such flowers as only spring; they say, from earth that's felt,
A shower of human blood, of victims sacrificed to gods divine.

LIVIA takes the wreath and NARCISSA sits opposite her, on the left end of the impluvium seat. LUCIA watches upper right, where TRANQUILLIUS enters. They converse apart, over the stylobate.

LIVIA.

A dark, strange riddle that so pure a flower,
Should nurture in a soil so terrible.... Oh!

She is hurt by a thorn in the wreath.

NARCISSA.

I did not go to do it, dear: There, there, 'twas not a thorn.

It does not hurt you much.

222

Come, come, forget the trifling wound; She moistens LIVIA'S forehead with water from the impluvium.

I'll let you win a game of hucklebones, I will.

Watch, Lucia, watch!

She produces five small, cubic blocks and they play in the manner of the present-day game of chuckie stones or jacks.

Three, two; you have already won.

LIVIA.

And three more makes me four.

NARCISSA.

In counting thus, I vow the game is made to move

12 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

With unaccustomed speed. *LUCIA warns them.*

We'll finish it some other time; you're not much hurt;
For see, here Titus comes, and he hath frowning said,

231 "This pastime lacks in dignity."

I fear the monster. Come, escape while yet you may!

Exeunt NARCISSA and LUCIA, lower right. TRANQUILLIUS vaults the stylobate and follows them out. Enter TITUS, upper right.

TITUS.

Sweet Livia.... Why Livia! My dear!

She remains seated and continues to take no notice of him

What spell prevents the movement of thy lips?

She moves her lips. He betrays amusement but she frowns and he is unable to fathom her mood. He is on the left. She presently speaks.

LIVIA.

You just now spoke?

TITUS.

No! No! I wanted to. I would have asked what magic
Held your lips so firm; from whence this mood,
This coldness, this unusual distance comes?

LIVIA.

You spoke, sweet sir?

TITUS.

240 Ah, Livia, tell me what I've done, dear;
Leave me not to grope thus in the darkness of your discontent.
Exists there no way out?

LIVIA.

As I am never discontent, there's no way out.

TITUS.

How many hours, then, till the dawn of thy forgiving smiles?
What have I done that I should suffer thus?

LIVIA.

'Tis not so much what you have done, that should provoke me;
It is your neglect and what you've failed to do,
That rouses up the wolf within my breast;
Though I congratulate myself on having,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

13

Singly and alone, o'ercome my temper, so that now,
I say in truth, I never knew myself more lovable.

TITUS perceives that her anger is simulated.

TITUS.

252 And never showed yourself as little so.
What is't I've failed to do?

LIVIA.

To keep your temper, sir.

TITUS.

I never knew myself more lovable.

LIVIA.

And never looked so black;

Know then, when I just now, most foolishly,
Desired to kiss my husband he was miles away,
And I was then compelled to kiss that jar,
So blackening my lips that they mistook me for a clown:
I thought they'd laugh the very curtains down.

TITUS.

262 If you had sent me word or had I known----

LIVIA.

A miserable lover thou, to feel no inkling of my pain.
So much did I desire thee that the very air,
Was heavy with my longing:
Thy light heart, was it oppressed!
True love had flown from Egypt even,
Though my wish had trivial been.
If I had sent thee word or hadst thou known.
270 Break not the humble, innocent, black jar.

TITUS.

Who laughed at thee?

LIVIA.

Nor wreak your poor remorse upon their heads;
They had good cause to laugh,
While you had no excuse for staying hence.

14 **The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY**

TITUS.

You'll let me black my lips as yours were blacked.

He kisses the jar in front.

LIVIA.

The color comes not off,
The jar hath found you out for what you are.

TITUS.

Am I to blame because my lips have not the sweetness requisite

To melt the very lacquer of the jar?

280

It sure hath found me out for what I am,

A dull, cold, miserable piece of clay, no better than itself.

LIVIA.

She rises and embraces him.

You speak the truth for once and I,

I love the truth; I kiss the truth you represent;

Not you, yourself; oh, no, no, no, no! *She kisses him a number of times.*

But you were on some errand; finish it.

TITUS.

I have forgot--

LIVIA.

The truth...

TITUS.

I went to greet our coming guests.

LIVIA.

Then I'll await them here. *TITUS goes up.*

290

Titus! *He sees that she is reproving him for leaving her without a farewell kiss. He returns, kisses her, and goes out, upper left. She rubs the kiss-spot off the jar.*

Titus, I've concluded now to go.

Exit LIVIA, upper left. AULUS appears from the tapestry.

AULUS.

Oh love sick Titus, vain, contented married man;

I could disturb thy satisfaction by the news,

Of this new hatching plot which Casca sits upon;

But what a shame 'twould be to spoil thy pleasure thus,

And what a blunder in a statesman like myself:

No, Titus, rest thee well, fear not the schemes

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

5

Of such weak, timid boys and dread not mine,
For when, as the boastful Casca loves to say,
300 The fateful moment doth arrive;
The loving kindness of a midnight dagger driven home,
Makes thee a Roman god; a fate thou shouldst invite.
And while I 'wait the hour, I might as well remove
This Casca Lentullus; the time might come,
When I had rather see him in his tomb than in his toga.
Livia: She would bewail the loss of Titus,
Till my throne might shake, so she must bend to my necessity.
I'll spare her life and let her while her time in slavery;
A pleasing slavery. *Enter KLABO, upper right.
The scene is darkened by a storm.*
Oh Klabo, come! My mind is troubled by a dream;
The Greek astrologer Hypokrates stands by the palace gate;
312 Have him brought in to me. *He gives KLABO money.*

KLABO.

It shall be done.

AULUS.

But speak on no account of my infirmity.
Exit KLABO, middle left.
Oh powers divine, 'tis now I feel I am your favored instrument;
The plot you've just compounded in my brain to match
These several ends, I'll put in execution this same hour;
And Casca soon shall be removed by Titus' wrath,
Though Titus will not dream he hatched a plot;
320 For both shall in this turmoil be confused.

The surface of the water in the impluvium is disturbed by drops of rain. After holding out his hand to feel the rain AULUS moves to a less exposed position on the left. HYPOKRATES enters, middle left.

Hypokrates, a fee, a lordly fee awaits thy claws,
In case the matter which I have in mind,
Is helped along by your vile arts.
Know you on sight the rich patrician, Casca Lentullus.
The senator; whose sister was the vestal Livia?

HYPOKRATES.

I know him well.

16 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

AULUS.

And thou art known to him?

HYPOKRATES.

That honor hath not been accorded me.

AULUS.

329 'Tis well. I see him coming. Here, aside with me,
Till I instruct thee in a part I have for thee to play.

Exeunt AULUS and HYPOKRATES, lower left. Enter, lower right, CASCA.

CASCA.

He stops me with an empty threat.

A boy and yet he blocks Ambition's course,
And thus my overmastering desire is put in leading strings.

A boy! A boy! A boy, indeed!

O speak to Cæsar soon, good Pliny, speak to Cæsar soon.

Enter AULUS, lower left.

Aulus, scarred warrior, good day to thee.

AULUS.

You note my wounds.

CASCA.

To envy them.

AULUS.

And were they yours, what use wouldst make of them?

CASCA.

Hadst thou my youth, what use wouldst make of it?

Hadst thou my wealth, the prestige

Of the name of Lentullus.

My rich patrician blood, my eloquence;

What use wouldst make of them?

AULUS.

I would not idly stand and long for scars;

I would not watch contentedly,

The antics of a country boor upon the Roman throne.

CASCA.

I've known thee for a bitter man,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

17

But now you over-step most dangerous bounds.

AULUS.

350 Whilst thou dost halt at thy inviting Rubicon.

CASCA.

Misjudge me if you will, and call my caution fear;
But why hidst thou thy meaning in a metaphor?
Have you a soldier's tongue?

AULUS.

I have! And though you hawk to Cæsar what I say,
And bring me back my words,
Transformed to daggers by his anger, yet I'll speak:
I dream of you as emperor; I picture you,
Decked with imperial purple, ruling all the world.

CASCA.

Another counselor like you and I would dream such dreams,
And draw myself such images of pomp and power.

AULUS.

A man of courage need not ask for more than one such counselor.
I was in Spain when Nero died and there I cast my eye about,
And spying worthy Galba, took to him my troops,
And with them victory.

When Otho shortly seized the throne,
I whipped the armies he sent out and made Vitellius emperor.
Vespasian's friends advanced, and at Verona
We came face to face;

369 I could have crushed them there forever, but
Vitellius had not proven worthy of the purple; I surrendered:
Had I fought;

The proud Vespasian, where would he be now,
Who styles himself "The Favorite of Destiny,"
Who chills at my approach; forgets
That I have made him all he is?

You've now grown up a man and you shall be
My sweeping hand to cuff these Flavian upstarts back,
To the soil from whence they sprang.

18 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

CASCA.

Have you no dreams?

AULUS.

380 I am too old and have too many foes,
It seems that I must be content to give the power;
And take it back.
But Casca, know that I am not alone in this advice;
See, here's a list of men,
Fresh pledged to overcome the Flavian boors;
And all we lack's a man to take their robes.
In midnight councils we have wearily discussed,
And cast about in search of such a man;
At last, despite your youth, on you the choice has fallen;
I have come, their representative, to offer you the leadership,
And finding you so apt---HYPOKRATES enters, upper left, KLABO pretending to oppose him. KLABO retires.

HYPOKRATES.

Yea! Yea! I will see Casca Lentullus!

393 Most noble Casca, I do beg of you, *Kneeling to CASCA.*
Abide my presence and dismiss your friend,
For I have had a vision touching you,
My news comes down from Heaven, straight!
From time to time AULUS and HYPOKRATES craftily congratulate each other on their success in deceiving CASCA.

CASCA.

He is my friend. Proceed.

HYPOKRATES.

404 As I lay dreaming in my cave last night,
Of old time Grecian grandeur,
Suddenly I felt myself whisked through the air,
And ages passed it seemed; at last,
I found myself upon the edge of some vast plain;
Around it mountains, through it rivers,
While the verdure blessed the eyesight,
And the fragrance of the wildflowers,
With the music of the birds,
So lulled the other master senses,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

19

That, methought I must expire for joy;
And so I would have done
Had not the gods been in a frowning mood,
Which so alloyed the atmosphere that I could live;
412 For you must know the place was Paradise.
And though I was not bid to speak to you,
Yet from their talk 'twas evident that I have been selected,
To inform the object of their wrath
What reparation he must make to gain their favor
And avert the doom which they in congress have decided on.

CASCA.

Have I been noticed by the gods, have I aroused their anger?
Go impostor! tell your lies to ears more gullible.
420 Here's what you want, away! *HYPOKRATES refuses the proffered money.*

HYPOKRATES.

I speak the truth.

AULUS.

This wierd astrologer
Hath ever borne a supernatural fame.

HYPOKRATES.

The goddess Vesta rages with the insult offered her,
By Livia's desertion of her sacred temple,
And that foul, unnatural marriage to the tyrant's son.
'The other residents of Paradise are scarcely less incensed;
They have decreed that Livia shall answer with her life.

CASCA.

Oh monstrous verdict! Fellow thou art come from Hades, not--

HYPOKRATES.

Let not the hateful uniform of poverty impeach my character;
All men of mystic knowledge, like myself,
432 Are doomed to wear such rags;
For had we raiment fit to match our occult fame,
Dire consequences would result from our ambitious plots.

CASCA.

Go on.

20 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

HYPOKRATES.

They have decreed that Livia shall answer with her life;
That you shall be their instrument,
That you shall offer up your sister, now, a sacrifice to Vesta;
Failing which, she, you and all your family
Shall perish from the earth.

CASCA.

Oh fearful sentence!
Greek, I tell thee thou art come from Hades,
Justice hath her splendid seat on high!

HYPOKRATES.

444 And Justice is offended by thy sister's deed.

CASCA.

The day of human sacrifice in Rome has passed,
The appointed fate for sinning vestals hath for centuries been
A living burial not a bloody sacrifice.

HYPOKRATES.

Her crime is blacker than hath ever been committed by a vestal,
So her punishment with greater horror is decreed.
'Tis time to choose.

You must not bait the gods with indecision.
You must spring, with all the panther's swiftness,
To their work. The deed must be completed
While the sun yet shines above the horizon.
But know that should this edict of the gods
Be manfully obeyed, their favor will be gained,
457 And they will shower whatever gifts
Thou feelst inclined to ask.
'Tis time to choose....

CASCA.

I will obey....

HYPOKRATES.

Your resolution's made; you will not stop for tears,
Nor yet in fear of Titus' power?

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

21

CASCA.

The sun shall set upon the execution of this fearful deed;
The gods alone have power to change my will.

HYPOKRATES.

I brought me back from Heaven, sir,
A pair of sacred birds, and they shall guide our course.

Exit HYPOKRATES, middle left, after having been secretly congratulated by AULUS.

AULUS.

It warms my cold, grey heart to see again a man
Who does not hesitate, who rises to the hour;
But let my long experience teach thee now the surest course.

CASCA.

470 I tremble, Aulus, at my resolution;
Guide me with thy steady hand into the royal port,
And through this storm, and you shall never say:

“He chills at my approach.” *TITUS, LIVIA and
PLOTINA enter, upper
left. AULUS whispers
to CASCA.*

I crave thee, Titus,
Livia’s company a little while.

TITUS.

If she agrees, I do.

LIVIA.

My brother can not say
My ears were ever cold to his request.

Exeunt TITUS and PLOTINA upper right.

AULUS.

480 Your brother now hath on his lips
Entreaties which he dreads to utter.
He is dumb because it is become his duty to inform you
Of the threatening dangers hanging o’er our heads.

LIVIA.

My brother!

CASCA.

Aulus will explain, my dear. *He sits.*

22 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

AULUS.

The superstitious rabble of the Roman streets
Have seized the notion that the backward spring,
And long, cold rains are visited upon the world
Because a vestal virgin did allow the sacred flame to flicker out.
With words of discontent and rumblings deep,
490 The populace demand her punishment.

LIVIA.

No sound hath yet reached me.

AULUS.

No one hath dared to violate the dictate of thy husband;
He hath said your peace of mind must not be touched,
And he hath laid a heavy hand upon the foremost of the crowd;
But still the heaven works.
A plain, rough soldier have I always been,
But now regret my lack of honied words;
The news we bear doth need them much.

LIVIA.

Delay no more!

AULUS.

Unless we find a means
To lay the ruffled feathers of the street,
There soon will be a rising up; and thee and Titus,
With the rest, will feel the fury of the mob.

LIVIA.

Doth Titus know?

AULUS.

505 He knows,
But proudly scorns the wishes of the world.
We have not gone to him; it would be useless;
You, your brother and myself, alone, must fight this fate.

LIVIA.

What part am I to have?

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

23

AULUS.

510

We think it best for thee to disappear
Until the storm is past. *NARCISSE enters, lower left,
remaining undiscovered.*

LIVIA.

But Titus will not let me go.

AULUS.

Means will be found to gain at least his sufferance.

This afternoon, at dinner, you'll arise and say

That you've become a Christian;

That the life you lead is hateful to your better nature;

That the court's a seat of wickedness and sin;

For so the Christians rave.

As you say that, there will appear a friend of ours,

Gaudentius, at the door, and you will go with him

521

Despite your husband's violence;

For we will have the emperor made acquainted with the plot,

As he doth keep his ear against the ground more closely,

Thus, will you escape the blind, destructive love of Titus,

To return when danger's past.

LIVIA.

How long, my brother, will it be?

AULUS.

Until the fancy of the mob

Is shortly caught by some new whim.

LIVIA.

Oh tell me!

Can there be no other way? *CASCA shakes his head
and goes upper left.*

AULUS.

Your brother is oppressed for fear the plot will fail

532

By your faint-heartedness,

Or that you will impart a knowledge of the secret

To your husband, thus destroying every hope.

Full well he knows the dangers which surround us;

Though our plot is bold 't is much the best,

24 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

For did you say farewell to Titus privately,
He would persuade you to remain;
And did you go without disguise to Casca's house,
Its doors would fall before thy husband's wrath.
'T is resolution wins the darkest day,
542 And we three here must sternly act as one.

LIVIA.

Yea, sternly act, if we have courage for it,
Though I fear, I fear a fatal outcome in this course.
There's yet another risk you know not of.
Will you betray a trust?
You are mistaken if you think that Titus does not fear,
For he fears something, all that it may be I do not know;
He says it is his brother's treachery and violence,
For as you know, Domitian with impatience views the throne.
You have not known that Titus hath an heir.
552 He's three months old.

The secret has been closely kept,
My brother, even, knows not of his little nephew Numa,
Who is thought to be some soldier's sport.
You may prevail on me to leave my husband,
But you'll never come between this boy and me.

CASCA turns toward them.

Oh keep the secret yet!

AULUS.

The good wife of Gaudentius, famed for mother's love,
To her will you entrust the child?
Then have it brought while I am sending out for her.

Exit AULUS, lower right, and LIVIA, upper right. NARCISSA approaches CASCA. He is startled.

NARCISSA.

562 What scheme have you on foot?
What cunning plot hath that old reprobate hatched out?
Be sure that he will prove your friend,
And such a friend the very warmth of his affection
Will suffice for your undoing;

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

25

Such a friend as you have been to me.

CASCA.

Narcissa, you misjudge me,
It 's not wise to say a man 's your enemy until he 's dead.

NARCISSA.

570 And then it matters not.

CASCA.

Believe me, child,
Though I am tardy, I will act the better part.

NARCISSA.

Before you 're dead.
But I will see that Livia is protected
From this aulic craft, as far as I have power.
When she becomes a Christian so will I.

CASCA.

Narcissa, dear, the situation 's delicate, the danger great.

NARCISSA.

Wherever she is taken I will go,
So waste thee no more words.

CASCA.

580 I may forbid.

NARCISSA.

You threaten me!

CASCA.

I beg your pardon, sweet!
So tender is the peril that I know not what I say.
Believe me, dear, your presence would not
Further Livia's interests while you might destroy us all.
Remain behind and claim from me whatever favor I can grant.

NARCISSA.

Then promise me that Livia from these affairs
Shall finally emerge unharmed.

26 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

CASCA.

The pledge is made. She comes! Away with me,
For from this moment you must act a minor part.

Exeunt both, lower left. Enter LIVIA, upper right, carrying an infant. LUCIA follows, and, at LIVIA'S direction remains at the rear, keeping a close watch.

LIVIA.

My gentle babe, you smile on me in all my misery.
592 You could not smile if I were doing wrong;
You could not smile with danger threatening,
Could you now, my love? *GAUDENTIUS enters lower right.*

GAUDENTIUS.

I've brought the costume which you are to wear.

LIVIA.

Are you a Christian, sir?

GAUDENTIUS.

I try to be.

LIVIA.

Have you no fear in harboring me, of Titus wrath?

GAUDENTIUS.

I am persuaded, Aulus hath said, you have espoused our faith;
That you desire to make your home among the Christians;
Lowly though we be, I trust that none of us
Shall e'er be swerved from duty's path by Cæsar's frown.

LIVIA.

603 My fears grow less before so brave a man.

GAUDENTIUS.

And may your faith increase. *Enter MARTHA, lower right.*

MARTHA.

You've sent for me?

GAUDENTIUS.

The Empress Livia hath here a child,
An infant which, for weighty reasons, must remain unknown.
The Spirit hath descended on her head

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

27

610 And she desires to leave the court,
And be with us awhile.
Take you the child. *LIVIA kisses the child and gives it to MARTHA.*
My wife shall not be senseless of the honor,
Nor neglectful of the trust.

LIVIA.

Where shall I see him next?

GAUDENTIUS.

At Pliny's house.

LIVIA.

At Pliny's house!

GAUDENTIUS.

620 The noble Pliny hath been generous enough
To set apart for me this day some chambers in house,
That of my architectural skill he may
With more minuteness learn;
And there in secrecy you may remain.

LIVIA.

Oh Martha! Martha! He's my life!

MARTHA.

And he shall be as dear to me as any of my own.

Exit MARTHA, lower right, with the child.

GAUDENTIUS.

And when you call me I'll be waiting here.

Exit GAUDENTIUS, lower right.

LIVIA.

627 Oh heavy heart, I feel thee faltering in thy throb;
I feel the darkness stealing on,
But in the twilight I must smile
And seem to be the mirror of the noonday sun.

Enter PLOTINA and TITUS, upper right.

TITUS.

Plotina--- *He wishes it to appear that she has delayed their return.*

28 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

PLOTINA.

Titus! Lay the blame right there, *She touches him on the shoulder.*
For I will shoulder none of it as I am not responsible
For your delay. I dragged him back.

LIVIA.

633 I thought as much. A sorry lover, he. *She turns away in tears.*

TITUS.

Your moods would render any lover so.

LIVIA.

A wit!

PLOTINA.

A charming wit!

LIVIA.

A brilliant wit!

PLOTINA.

He hath good points.

LIVIA.

A few.

TITUS.

How much is bid for me?

PLOTINA.

I 'd much prefer a slave from Greece.

LIVIA.

Or even Africa.

PLOTINA.

I am afraid he is not sound.

LIVIA.

644

That 's all he is.

PLOTINA.

Oh then he 's worth, say, ninety nine sesterii.

LIVIA.

I 'll bid a hundred more.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

29

TITUS.

A good sized hog would not be sold for that.

PLOTINA.

But you 're a runt.

LIVIA.

649

Though stockily built.

PLOTINA.

Yes! Yes! But clumsy; still I 'll bid a thousand more.

LIVIA.

Then I will say eleven thousand.

PLOTINA.

I 'll say twenty four.

TITUS.

The market price of runts is mending rapidly.

LIVIA.

When once my mind is set, upon a trifle,

No one lives to thwart my mood;

I 'll bid a hundred thousand times your price.

PLOTINA.

The auction 's not done yet; I 'll go to seek more capital.

Exeunt PLOTINA and LUCIA, upper right. LIVIA embraces TITUS.

LIVIA.

This don't torment you, Titus?

TITUS.

Ah my love, I would be sold for the smallest part
Of one sestertius and think that no man ever brought
So high a price if you did make the purchase for yourself.

LIVIA.

You love me Titus?

TITUS.

663

Love you----

LIVIA.

Ah I know you do,

30 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

But will you always love me so?
Perchance should I at some ill-fated time persuade myself
To find in other occupations more engaging pleasures
Than thy love affords; should I from fear or duty go away;
Will then your love remain as firm as now,
670 And will our keen-edged happiness endure
The rasp of time; the grit of jealous doubt?

TITUS.

When the sun his orbit leaves,
When day doth follow night no more,
And Night doth reign supreme;
Our love will then burn low.
When all the winds, the gentle winds, the sturdy winds,
The fierce rude winds, have ceased to blow,
The embers of our love will still be bright;
But when a silence vast reigns o'er the earth
680 And every sound is dead,
And when at last the waves die down
And the restless sea is stilled, then dear,
The last light of our love will sink away.

KLABO enters, upper right.

KLABO.

Your father, sir, upon a point of state,
Desires your counsel ere he comes to dine. *Exit KLABO. upper right.*

LIVIA.

I knew you loved me not, you prove it, quite,
By setting bounds to the illimitable mood.
What hath the sun to do with love?
In twilight are we colder than at noon?
The winds, do we need them to fan our thoughts?
And silence, when are we not envious of every sound
692 That blurs our lightest whisper?
Whilst the waves, I've known thee long,
But now I first have learned
The distant sea hath aught to do with our sweet love,
Much less to terminate its amorous course.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

31

No! Titus, no! Think not our love shall ever feel
The touch of hideous death;
In some far happier place
The flame of our immortal passion, bright and clear,
701 Shall always and forever burn. *They embrace.*
Have faith, my husband, in my love,
And in the darkest hour remember
That my final thought shall always be for you.

TITUS.

The darkest hour shall be
When I have lost one thought of thine.

LIVIA.

Would you deny me pleasure in the child?

TITUS.

Your thoughts for him are thoughts for me.
Ah let us go and see him now.

LIVIA.

No! No! Thou canst not see him now!

TITUS.

711

And why?

LIVIA.

Thy father waits for thee.

TITUS.

He 'll pardon the delay.

LIVIA.

But Numa is asleep.

TITUS.

I 've looked at him in sleep before.

LIVIA.

But he is nervous, fretful,
And we must not run the risk of waking him.

TITUS.

Well! Well! I think a father cares a little for a child.

32 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

LIVIA.

You hurt me Titus; love, you do. *They embrace. Exit TITUS, upper right. BERENICE appears on the left, from behind the stylobate, having entered through an opening invisible to the audience.*

720

Farewell, my love! Farewell, my love!
Was ever prospect fair so clouded over,
Changed so in a moment, thus,
To gloomy night and blinding mist?

BERENICE.

Unfaithful Titus! Still another victim to thy cold caprice.
Exit LIVIA, middle right. Enter CASCA, lower left.

CASCA.

'Tis Berenice! How have you returned to Rome?

She places her right hand across her brow and quickly removes it, in a peculiar and noticeable though natural manner. CASCA makes a similar motion.

BERENICE.

Then you are in the plot.

CASCA.

How came you to this room?

BERENICE.

I know these passageways as well as thou the streets of Rome.

CASCA.

729 You run grave risks and have not much to gain.

BERENICE.

I risk no more than you, I gain no less.
But I'd have thought thee satisfied to have the Flavians stay;
Can Aulus make a better emperor, for you, than one of them?

With an effort CASCA conceals his surprise at this revelation of the duplicity of AULUS.

CASCA.

Do you expect to be his queen?

BERENICE.

When Aulus sits upon the throne, I sit upon his knee.

CASCA.

You care but little for the forms of dignity.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

33

BERENICE.

736

An empress is above reproach.

CASCA.

To be his empress came you here?

BERENICE.

He 's rather old.

CASCA.

Then make your best speed to Cilicia's bounds again;

I kill the hope, for like a schoolboy I 've been tricked,

And like a schoolboy I will trick again.

Until this moment I have thought that I had been selected

As emperor to be. Conspire no more!

BERENICE.

744

Tell Titus will you! Wait!

Each one of us is for himself;

Though once I thought a bit of thee.

CASCA.

A thought it did remain.

BERENICE.

It might come back;

Would you not make a better emperor than Aulus, man!

CASCA.

He said as much.

BERENICE.

You 'd make a finer figure on the throne.

CASCA.

And have a fatter knee.

BERENICE.

753

A knee 's a knee.

I thought a great deal of you once.

CASCA.

Plot on.

34 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

BERENICE.

If Titus wants me back,
The first conspirator who takes a step
Shall stumble to the ground; if not below.

759

If Titus still remains a rock,
We 'll make old Aulus emperor to gratify his pride;
A day of haughtiness shall do for him, a single day.

CASCA.

And when we kill him for his crimes,
We 'll be applauded by the crowd. This plan must be the one.

BERENICE.

Though not if Titus takes me back.

CASCA.

765

You know that he 's a married man.

BERENICE.

His wife!

CASCA.

My sister.

BERENICE.

You 've no sister out of childhood.

CASCA.

Livia, the vestal.

BERENICE.

Married, do you say, and secretly?
He 'll tire of her.

CASCA.

772

In time.

BERENICE.

He must! Today!
Attack her character.

CASCA.

My sister!

BERENICE.

Dost thou think that she will place
 777 The robes of state on you,
 And see her husband unprotected, and herself despised?

CASCA.

She dies today ere sunset. Klabo! *A loud and sudden call.*
 Hide! *BERENICE conceals herself on the left. Enter KLABO, upper right.*

Did you allow Hypokrates to enter from the street
 When he came in?

I know that he and Aulus had been talking
 Long together just before he came to me.
 I only wish you to confirm my knowledge of the fact.

KLABO.

Your confirmation, sir, must come from other sources,
 For Hypokrates had not been seen by Aulus when I let him in.

CASCA.

Ask Tacitus to presently come here; and Varro too.
Exit KLABO, upper right. BERENICE reappears.
 I am commanded by the greater powers to offer Livia a sacrifice,
 790 The message coming through Hypokrates;
 I feared that Aulus might have plotted that.

BERENICE.

He would not dare, the sacrilege would be too great.

CASCA.

He has arranged a guard for her!
 He thinks to cheat the gods, to steal her from my vengeance for
 His hateful purposes. I, too, will have a body of retainers ready
 When she leaves the palace gate.

BERENICE.

She is to leave?

CASCA.

Pretending to become a Christian,
 799 So that Titus' wrath may fall on them,
 Thus giving me an opportunity to execute the deed.

36 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

BERENICE.

To put the blame upon the Christians, ah!
Why, let it fall upon some enemy of yours;
803 Let Titus think she goes to him;
And then he will not grieve and mope for her.

CASCA.

On Pliny's head, for he opposes us.

BERENICE.

She 'll go?

CASCA.

We 've made her fear the mob.

BERENICE.

She 's very apt to turn and face its violence,
If she hath metal in her like your own.
Stay! Have her think that I am here at Titus' wish,
That he, unfaithful to his vows, hath called me back again.

CASCA.

812 If she doth falter, it shall then be done.

BERENICE.

A loving woman does not lightly leave her husband's house.

CASCA.

We 'll have some proof; write on this plate:
"You are commanded, Casca Lentullus,
To execute your sister with the rites prescribed by fate."

BERENICE.

And forge the name of Titus Flavius.

CASCA.

819 No! We 'll let him sign it for himself,
And then I think that she will go.

Exit BERENICE, lower left. Enter TRANQUILLIUS, upper right.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Who 's the old woman, there?

CASCA.

Your mother, it is said.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

37

TRANQUILLIUS.

Then we are brothers, sire.

CASCA.

823

The honor's yours.

TRANQUILLIUS.

I fear your generosity will spoil your temper, sire.

TRANQUILLIUS seats himself at the right, on the bundle which GAUDENTIUS has left.

CASCA.

I've not that quality.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Temper, sire; or generosity? Are both entirely gone?

Did that old woman take a bundle off?

CASCA.

Why so?

TRANQUILLIUS.

I have been sent to get a bundle here; I see it not.

CASCA.

No?

TRANQUILLIUS.

No?

CASCA.

No.

TRANQUILLIUS.

No!

CASCA.

No!

TRANQUILLIUS.

No!

CASCA.

No!

TRANQUILLIUS.

Oh!

He discovers the bundle.

CASCA.

Oh!

38 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Exit TRANQUILLIUS and enter LIVIA, upper right.

LIVIA.

339 I will not go! Send quickly, bring Gaudentius back,
He took a treasure from me. Send! Oh! Send, for him!

CASCA refuses.

'T was wrong to think of going and I happily see again
The light of reason ere it is too late.

CASCA.

You 've been persuaded; you have told.

LIVIA.

My heart alone hath been my counselor.

CASCA.

Your judgement, what of that?

LIVIA.

846 I have no judgement and I want no judgement
Which will coldly come between my love and me.

CASCA.

Rush on to your destruction for the weak indulgence of an hour.

LIVIA.

I need advice; alone I can not know what 's best,
And whether I should disregard the promptings of my heart.

I 'll not be satisfied to go without advice;
Let 's leave it to some judge, a man unbiassed,
Why not Trajan, Pliny, Juvenal or Tacitus?

CASCA.

Say Juvenal, as he 's the oldest of the lot.

LIVIA.

855 I 'll to him, straight. *Exit LIVIA, upper left.*

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

39

The second folylogue of Casca Lentullus.

I stand upon the parting ways;
I stand between the roads to happiness and fame;
I stand between inaction and the mastery
Of circumstance; between this fearful impulse
And the peaceful conduct of the full, unsullied heart.
With honor may I save the day for Titus,
For I 've gone to lengths no further
Than are warranted in seeking out conspiracy;
With vigor I may seize the throne,
And occupy that splendid summit
Which inspires the universe with envy and alarm.
I hesitate to catch the challenge up
By Fate thrown flaunting down;
I cringe, a creature of her will, a thing of mere caprice.
O mocking Fate! Come try thy wrath on me,
Bring forth thy proofs, condemn me to inaction
If thou canst; come show me who is master,
Who shall rule the great ambition coursing in my veins!
Come to the conflict armed in all thy might,
For thou hast now an adversary fit to try thy skill.

Enter NARCISSA, lower left. The approach of TITUS causes her to retire without discovering herself to CASCAS. Her presence is a premonition.

40 **The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY**

Enter TITUS, upper right.

876

I seek you, sir! I have the worst of news.

TITUS.

A little time may wear it out.

CASCA.

Doth time wear out illicit love?

Doth time abate conspiracy?

TITUS.

You broach most serious subjects, Casca.

CASCA.

Seriously must they be met.

TITUS.

Conspiracies by scores are laid but few are ever hatched.

CASCA.

Intrigues by scores are carried on, and guilt and acquiescence

384 Flourish on the food of love but few are ever barred

Against the judgement seat of public scorn.

TITUS.

Should this touch me?

CASCA.

Thy father's throne is threatened by conspiracy;

Old Aulus leads the malcontents;

Thy house is robbed already of its joy,

For Pliny, graceful, polished Pliny, loves the empress;

Loves her with a passion long concealed but not denied.

TITUS.

Her brother!

CASCA.

No one else hath dared.

TITUS.

894

Proofs! Proofs! From even thee!

CASCA.

Conceal thy motive; read the words of Pliny's mouth.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

41

Enter TACITUS, upper right.

I've tried in vain to recollect that pretty speech of Pliny's;
Which Titus hath desired to hear. Give him the lines.

TACITUS.

899 I would not have an adept like the future emperor
Compare these straggling dots of mine
With his perfection in the art.

TITUS.

The speech!

TACITUS.

He takes the tablet from his breast and reads.

"Oh! Casca, look! Oh, look where Livia comes!
The charm of dignity in every movement lies,
She hath the fascination of immortal loveliness.
How like a gentle breath she moves along the corridor.
How like a dream her presence makes
The cold and gloomy hallways of this palace seem.
908 She, Casca, is thy sister-" *He stops.*

TITUS.

Read on!

TACITUS.

The rest is of but little moment, sir.

TITUS.

Read on!

TACITUS.

I've reached a part I do not care to read.

TITUS.

You've reached a part I wish to hear.

TACITUS.

I'd break a confidence by reading further, sir;
The matter does not signify the least.

TITUS.

Read on!

TACITUS.

917 I would regret to disobey thy last command.

42 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

CASCA.

No doubt it is a trivial thing that Tacitus conceals;
Perhaps within an hour he might be glad to read the rest.

TITUS.

920 I would not run the risk of losing what is left.

TACITUS.

I'll leave the tablet here upon the ledge.

CASCA.

To clinch the truth with evidence let Titus sign the plate.

TITUS.

Indeed my confidence in you doth not need that.

TACITUS.

But certain knowledge is a more substantial crown
For confidence than any halo of belief, however bright.

TITUS.

926 Mine, too, shall then be crowned.

TITUS throws his robe over the written portion of the tablet so that TACITUS may be sure that he does not read any of it while signing.

CASCA.

Another tablet for your signature.

TACITUS places his tablet on a ledge, down right, and goes out. TITUS signs CASCA'S tablet; the order for LIVIA'S death.

What think you now, is 't proof enough,
Or will you have some more?

TITUS.

Go on?

CASCA.

They have arranged for her to leave the palace in an hour.

TITUS.

932 I think she may, but under guard.

CASCA.

Control thyself! I'll have my spies see where she goes,
And take her into custody
When she has reached the meeting place.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

43

936 Let not this private grief, though,
 Blind you to the danger of the forming plot,
For this is only Pliny's share; the throne is envied, too.

TITUS.

Oh! What care I for that if she is gone?

CASCA.

It gives you power to punish her.

TITUS.

I will inform my father of the danger; he
Can cope with that. Instruct the spies.

Exit TITUS, upper right. Enter VARRO, lower right.

CASCA.

The empress leaves the palace gate within an hour.

She wears the Christian garb.

Remove her to the house of Marius Germanicus

346 Despite whatever opposition you may meet.

By this way: Livia comes!

Exit VARRO, lower right. Enter LIVIA and JUVENAL, upper left.

LIVIA.

Now Casca, thou art shown at fault,
For Juvenal, in his wisdom, hath confirmed my fears.

CASCA.

You think it best for her to stay?

JUVENAL.

To me there seems no need for all this haste.

CASCA.

Have you determined now to break your word with us?

LIVIA.

953 I have decided not to go.

CASCA.

And she hath told thee all the reasons for the plan?

JUVENAL.

I trust my reputation hath not yet been sullied

44 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

By a judgement rashly given,
Though there may be facts in this which we have yet to learn.

CASCA.

There are! Once more, I ask you, will you go?

LIVIA.

959 I have determined not to go.

CASCA.

Then stay and meet your death!
For since you pierce my subterfuge, the truth must be revealed;
The Jewess hath returned and Titus loves her still,
A fatal order hath been signed,
And I must be your executioner.

JUVENAL.

Unnatural man!

CASCA.

Things willed by Cæsar must be done.
The awful cost of disobedience would be in vain;
Go then, before the order reaches me.

JUVENAL.

969 You know?

CASCA.

I saw her write the tablet, sir!
Their plot is this: To the feast she comes,
And all of them will laugh her off;
She presently returns, and some laugh not;
A messenger comes in with news of rising discontent
Against the virgin hidden here, thyself!
The Jewess stands there waiting and a place is made for her.
Enter MONIDES, upper left.

LIVIA.

977 I'll go ere she returns.

CASCA.

Put on the garb; collect thy trinkets for the time is short.
Exit LIVIA, upper right. CASCA sits apart.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

45

JUVENAL.

Well Monides? Yes! Yes! I sent for you.

We have arranged a pleasantry

With one of Rome's voracious eaters;

982 When I send for you a little while from now,
Bring in what game you've shot, upon a hunt in which
'T will be supposed you'll be engaged.

Arrange it so that you shall bring no game with you

Except a crow. Shoot me a crow and bring it back.

Exit MONIDES, lower left. Enter PLINY and APICIUS upper right, where all the banqueters presently enter as occasion dictates.

PLINY.

Apicius, I am told, that in consideration of your noted appetite,
The emperor hath said you shall be served a double course.

APICIUS.

A double course! A double course!

Thou mockst my hunger, Pliny, with such news.

991 For ten long years have I intrigued
With Aulus, Klabo, even Julia and Plotina,
'That Vespasian might relax his discipline
And give me more to eat when I'm his guest.
Today, they said he had relented;
Now you say he has decreed a double portion!

JUVENAL.

While you wanted double that.

APICIUS.

My most self-sacrificing suit was for

999 A full quadruple course at least.

Expecting that, I have not swallowed food today,
For two long hours, and now you say a double course!

JUVENAL.

Poor, famine stricken wretch. *CASCA rises.*

APICIUS.

Yes! Yes! 't 'as been two hours, and then I only ate
A dozen Martian apples and a little quart of Massic wine;

46 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

And now I'll lie for five long hours upon this couch,
With but a double portion, ah!
1007 I fear I must despatch myself,
In imitation of my father's father,
If I am compelled to starve like this. *They are down left.*

PLINY.

A double course!

APICIUS.

I feel that I can sympathize with Christians in their fasts.

JUVENAL.

Alas, a double course!

Enter VESPASIAN, TACITUS and JULIA.

VESPASIAN.

To you the place of honor goes today, good Tacitus;
A man, who in addition to his many talents, can devise a dish
To dull the appetite, deserves in these voracious times
1016 The gratitude of temperate mankind,
Much less the place of honor at my humble meal,
Which you can see I have here in the atrium, today,
That the beauty of the peristyle
May thriftily economize the kitchen's cost. *He sits.*

TACITUS.

A man of honest purposes would rather taste thy bread
Than tongue the wines and salads of the richest feast in Rome.

Upon each of the three couches radiating from the two tables there is room for three persons. Beginning at the left, the banqueters are presently seated in the following order: PLOTINA, TRAJAN and APICIUS; TACITUS, (a vacant place) and PLINY; VESPASIAN, DEMETRIUS and JULIA; NARCISSE, CASCIA and GALLUS; JUVENAL, DOMITIAN and GRACCU; and AULUS, TITUS and LIVIA.

VESPASIAN.

TACITUS sits.

1023 Come, Pliny, sit thee here with Tacitus.
They call me niggard, miser, avaricious country clown,
But though they lay this crime and that against my door,
I would not have them say I withered up
The freshness of a friendship such as thine, so sit thee here;
For separation ever proves the drouth of love.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

47

1029 TITUS. *PLINY, APICIUS and JULIA sit. TITUS and GALLUS enter.*
You, Juvenal, I will place against
The most appalling dish that Tacitus can offer,
For thy satire chokes the greediest men in Rome.
Enter DOMITIAN and DEMETRIUS, followed by KLABO. JUVENAL and TITUS sit.

APICIUS.
What jokes are these about economy?

JUVENAL. *GALLUS sits. Enter PLOTINA and NARCISSA.*
Starvation, dear Apicius, is the topic now,
The economic stage is past and dead.
CASCA, DOMITIAN, DEMETRIUS, PLOTINA and NARCISSA sit. The men lie on the couches at full length, resting on their left elbows, while the women sit erect or half reclining. Enter AULUS and GRACCUS, immediately taking their places.

APICIUS.
And truly---is---are---will there be no food?

1036 VESPASIAN.
Until more guests arrive we 'll wait.

APICIUS.
Where 's Trajan, Nerva, Livia, Josephus?

TACITUS.
Mention not that Jew, I hate his kind.

DOMITIAN.
He 's writ a history.

TACITUS.
But he 's a Jew.

PLOTINA. *Enter LIVIA, taking her place.*
And Trajan is delayed by fights among the Jews.
They spattered mud upon his robe.

VESPASIAN.
Is he ashamed of earth?

1044 PLOTINA.
'T was I who sent him back. *LUCIA enters and sits beside LIVIA.*

JULIA.
Disturbances among the Jews are very frequent and notorious.

48 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

PLINY.

Nay! It is the Christians and the Jews, and not the Jews alone,
Who break the peace.

JULIA.

But how are they opposed?

JUVENAL.

1049 The matter, I am told, is a culinary difference,
The Christians liking their fruit whole,
The Jews preferring theirs, particularly apples, nicely peeled.

APICIUS.

Let us discuss the meal and not the Jews; the dice!

*TRANQUILLIUS enters with a cup of dice for each table.
The guests throw in rotation, beginning on the left.*

TITUS.

Christianity's a baleful superstition,
Newly spread from Palestine.

DOMITIAN.

1055 And it deserves a careful scrutiny;
'Tis said the Christians with their gods
Deny to other people theirs. We'll watch them close.

JUVENAL.

They are your enemies indeed,
For Christian is as poor in rhymes as one of them in goods,
While Jew will rhyme with screw and shoe and slew and few,
And you can hew your poem through
And glue your name to fame,
1063 With forty rhymes for Jew still left in view.

APICIUS.

I think that every man should have his individual god.

JUVENAL.

And I maintain that every god should have his individual man.
That is, if men are found, enough to go around.

DOMITIAN.

It seems to me that every fool should have his individual cage.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

49

JUVENAL.

And each and every poet grand should have his individual pen.
1069 I've won the throw!

APICIUS.

And luck has favored me;
Now, Juvenal, throw; and see who'll be the master of the feast!

JUVENAL.

Sweet Venus is my throw.

APICIUS.

And aces, mine. *They laugh at him.*

VESPASIAN.

Now, Juvenal, propose the order of the meal.

JUVENAL.

1075 Bring on the light and airy Setine wine.

APICIUS.

But first the pumice stone to whet our throats,
And then Falernian wine; this Setine kind is sweetened oil,
The other's rich and red.

JUVENAL.

Sour blood, gross appetite!

APICIUS.

This chicken-livered cynic has a cobweb throat.

JUVENAL.

With a velvet palate.

APICIUS.

And a thimble-sized interior.

JUVENAL.

1083 But I thank the gods that my exterior
Hath never yet got in my way.

APICIUS.

'Tis a gastronomic honor, sir

50 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

It shows I always know what good food is.

JUVENAL.

And always shows you never know when you have had enough.

APICIUS.

Its capacity 's its boast and pride.

VESPASIAN.

1089 He can not know when he has had enough,
He lies unconscious then.

APICIUS.

Its capacity 's its boast and pride.

JUVENAL.

Ho! ho! How much say, doth it hold?

APICIUS.

Immeasurable quantities.

JUVENAL.

How much?

APICIUS.

1095 How much, say you, it will refuse to hold?

JUVENAL.

I have an honest archer, Monides, now on a hunt;
I'll wager you that he brings with him back
More game than yon can stomach in a week.

APICIUS.

I gladly take your bet; of what amount?

JUVENAL.

A thousand new sestertii.

APICIUS.

A thousand---new sestertii.

VESPASIAN.

1102 Let 's drink to the choice of the gods.

They drink, the wine having been brought by KLABO. VESPASIAN lets the wine spout from the small end of his horn through the air into his mouth. JUVENAL alone, follows his example.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

51

Come, Tacitus, to start the feast,
Bring on your promised dish
And see how it will turn our tongues against the meal.

TACITUS motions to KLABO, who brings in a veiled urn, putting it on the left table. JULIA unveils it.

TACITUS.

Within that urn, my friends, is all that 's left
Of one whose name has made the bravest of you tremble;
One whose lightest whim might end forever
Love and hope with life itself.
Proud, wilful, bloody, jealous Nero,
iiii That 's the sum of all your tyrannies,
That 's the crown you 'll wear until the end of time itself.

VESPASIAN.

You say 't is Nero's dust?

TACITUS.

He, even he, left friends;
They spirited away the urn for fear some desperate soul,
Dishonored by the monster, should in frenzy
Cast upon the winds his hated ashes; they
Succumbed before the hour of safety had returned;
A will was brought to me in the usual course of law,
1120 And thus I'm made the guardian to carry back
This dust unto its sepulchre;
I! I! Whose brother died at his command.
And my weak, long delayed revenge
Must satisfy itself in making him,
The once supreme and mighty ruler of the world,
The small talk of our meal.

APICIUS.

He was a tyrant, at his board
I left my fresh, young, strong digestion;
1129 Give me that again and take ten years of life.

JUVENAL.

He took from me my actor Paris!
How, in my old age, can I expect to find

52 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Another subject for a satire, such as he?
I've nothing now to rail against but gluttony and theft,
Dishonesty and husband poisoning and greed and lust and lies,
1135 And such minute discrepancies; so Nero,
Take a dozen years and give me back my actor, rank!

NARCISSA grasps the urn. AULUS rises and after putting a powder into a bowl of wine which KLABO has on a tray, returns to his place.

NARCISSA.

Ah, avaricious claw, what hast thou done
With all my father's gold?
Four hundred millions of sestertii
Thou filched from my inheritance and left me none;
A score of years for such a hill of gold I'd give.

TITUS.

And I as much if he'll bring back my friend Britannicus,
Whose death he managed with the vile Locusta's deadly draft.
Oh Nero! hath the world a friend to offer any man,
1145 To match Britannicus?

TACITUS.

Another life is offered thee, why Nero, dost thou hesitate?

JUVENAL.

'Tis foolish, sirs, to think a man who never did a favor,
Will begin the practice, now he's dead.

TITUS.

My friends, I've lost a day!
What favor have I granted since the sun came up?
Not one? Here's Nero's dust, I'll favor it,
And we who jeer at him, once more will do him reverence.
A drink to Nero's dust!

JUVENAL.

And let us drink, as the emperor and myself are wont to do,
1155 In this time honored custom, friends.

They drink, but only JUVENAL and VESPASIAN spout the wine from the small end of the horn. LIVIA embraces LUCIA, refusing the wine. Enter BERENICE, lower left. Down right TRANQUILLIUS is holding a cake, which he regards with envy.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

53

VESPASIAN.

Simplicity is dead in these degenerate days,
And ancient vigor, sapped by luxury,
Consumes itself in idleness and vanity.

BERENICE.

Friends, give me to drink;
I learned that ancient art in Alexandria.

*The banqueters rise on their hands. LIVIA, LUCIA, JULIA
and TITUS stand. BERENICE extends her hand in vain.*

1161

Is this your far-famed Flavian hospitality?

Why not a farmhouse on my way from Greece
Hath held aloof with such ungraciousness as thine.

TACITUS.

Ah, Berenice, Jewess grand--and agéd--think you
We are farmers to be played upon?

BERENICE.

Contemptuous Tacitus, of all the men I've met
Since I last dined within these portals, none
Hath equalled thy injustice to my race.

PLINY.

1169

Sweet Berenice, which hath had
The intellect to pierce thy siren's charms?

BERENICE.

This boy, who's he?

TACITUS.

This venerable dame;
We'll have our fortunes told and let her go.

*Enter TRAJAN, upper left. At a motion from VESPASIAN he
takes his place.*

BERENICE.

Oh Titus! hath the day not been when jibes like these,
Would echo in the dungeons of the Mamertine?
You loved me then, and now you stand and see me jeered.
Time was when feasting waited on a mood of mine;
1178 And now, here Trajan, this young man, not long ago
A soldier rough from Spain, unpolished and uncouth,

54 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

He sits him down with emperors and I stand pleading,
Not for love or friendship, merely for a place with you,
That I may humbly listen to the accents,
Once poured out to me in passionate promises and vows.

TITUS.

You come without an invitation,
Nay, a banished and forbidden guest you come;
And so you stand.
You come because you hope to throw o'er me again
1188 The spell you exercized so long;
But Berenice, know that I have risen
High above that base infatuation,
Know that Titus rules himself again,
And haste thee back to thy Cilician kinglet,
Ere thy sister steals the fellow from thy arms.

BERENICE.

You lightly cast the seeds of scorn,
But heavily shall you reap the harvest of revenge.
This Livia; will the common herd of Rome
Fall down in adoration when it 's fully known
That you have taken from the temple for your lust
A vestal pure? Rouse not their wrath,
1200 But let our old time friendship spring again.

APICIUS rises and approaches her. She is facing the right and he goes below her and pretends to speak secretly.

APICIUS.

Oh I should like to take his place, fair Jew!

BERENICE slaps him in the face. A general laugh.

JUVENAL.

Oh ho! Apicius! tell us now, where you have ever found
A finer, warmer flavored dish than that?
Apicius, come! extol the Berenician digits!
Tell us all, the nature of the condiment, or possibly 'tis meat?
And rivals both the Kentish oyster and the Melian crane;
1207 Exceeds the flavor of the nightingale,
And makes the taste of peacocks hearts as flat as that!

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

55

APICIUS.

I did mistake a physic for a feast.

*He returns
to his place.*

BERENICE.

There is a place, between a young fool and an older one,

And even there I'd sit.

*Between PLINY
and TACITUS.*

TACITUS.

And throw the glamour of thy middle age upon the group.

BERENICE.

Oh Titus! should I tell you that conspiracy

Hath reared its hateful head again,

That men here drinking of your wine,

1216

Will presently be drinking of your blood,

And I could save you, would you take me back?

TITUS.

'Tis ninety eight conspiracies, if I remember,

Sometimes two a day, you've saved me from;

Your old time generosity in that respect

Seems with you still.

BERENICE.

I had sharp eyes for thee;

No plot did ever take such root, when I was loved,

Or spring such mighty branches

As the one whose growing shadow soon shall prove thy night.

TITUS.

A welcome darkness if it happily hides thy smile.

TRANQUILLIUS grandly bows her to the entrance.

BERENICE.

Beware thee Titus, of the swift resentment of discarded love.

TITUS.

*To KLABO, only LIVIA and LUCIA
being near enough to catch his words.*

1228

Detain her for a private interview.

Exit BERENICE, lower left. APICIUS spits after her.

Conspirators, if you be here,

Look in my father's face and ask yourselves

If he hath not a kindly domination held?

56 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Conspirators, look in his face,
And hesitate before you strike the faithful steward;
Think before you plunge your country into civil war,
And think before you place yourselves in opposition
1236 To the mighty hand that still rules Rome.

I think you all are friends;
I see no face that augurs mischief, here;
I think the Jewess spoke from spite,
I'm sure she did. We'll prove it! here, an oath!
By Nero's ashes and my father's head,
That you are loyal to our rule!

All at the left table, except VESPASIAN, put out their hands.

A GENERAL SPEECH.

Long live Vespasian, emperor!

TITUS.

1244 And here! *He places the urn on the right table and all put out their hands, except LUCIA and LIVIA.*
Your hand's unmoved.

LIVIA.

And so it shall remain.

TITUS.

Your brother, here----

LIVIA.

Forgets his father's death.

TITUS.

You will not swear you're loyal----

LIVIA.

Not by Nero's ashes.

TITUS.

1251 By the gods.

LIVIA.

Nor yet by them;

I'll swear no more by pagan gods or mortal dust,

For I am now become a Christian.

They all stand.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

57

TITUS.

Thou a Christian!

LIVIA.

Yea, a Christian, Titus,

She removes her white tunica-pallium, appearing in a black robe.

1257 I am done with courts and splendid pomp,
And luxury and sin. Gaudentius, come! *He enters, lower right.*
This worthy man will henceforth be my teacher and my guide.

TITUS.

What folly sir, is this?

You know that we have overlooked your superstitious worship,
For the sake of your great art, but now you step too far;
We will permit you yet to leave our presence,
But our wife remains.

LIVIA.

We go together.

TITUS.

Livia, tell me when I've given thee cause to leave thy home;
Have I been harsh, have I been faithless, cold or distant?
When have I denied thee any pleasure that the empire holds?
1269 And who could love thee with a deeper passion
Than the one which burns in me?

LIVIA.

I love thee still.

She turns to GAUDENTIUS with a gesture of appeal.

GAUDENTIUS.

But her Redeemer's voice is heard.

TITUS.

Invoke thy slimy magic now,
And see if it prevails against the Roman sword.

TITUS motions and a number of soldiers, led by SEXTUS, enter, middle left. CASCA approaches TITUS.

Arrest the man and watch the woman,
1276 Lest by occult practices they spirit her away.

CASCA.

To TITUS.

You hold her and destroy all evidence; I've posted guards!

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VESPASIAN.

The soldiers retire at his gesture.

My son, allow them to depart in peace;
I've dreaded long the mischief which might come to us
Through this unnatural woman. Think yourself well rid of her.

TITUS.

1281 I want to save her from her own intended folly,
Even though her love I seemingly have lost.

Exit GAUDENTIUS, lower right. AULUS in trying to speak to LIVIA privately, is seen by TITUS.

I saw your signal!

Livia! *She perceives that he reproaches her for neglecting their customary farewell kiss. She turns and kisses him.*

LIVIA.

Oh think no more of this
Than of a journey to my mother's house!
Turn not your heart against me, Titus,
Think you I would leave you thus, without a cause?
And think you it shall be for all time; no, no, no!
1290 You'll love me still, you'll love me always
And the happy days shall come again;
The happy days shall come again.

Exit LIVIA, lower right. VESPASIAN groans.

VESPASIAN.

My drink's been drugged! Assist me hence!
I'll be a god myself in half an hour,
If they can't ease this pain.

TITUS summons soldiers who enter on the left, led by VARRO and SEXTUS. Excunt DEMETRIUS, GALLUS and GRACUS hurriedly, lower left. AULUS is arrested. VESPASIAN surrounded by his guests moves to the right.

TITUS.

Now, Aulus, we shall know the meaning of that signal,
1297 And the reason for this poison mixing.

Exit AULUS in custody, middle left, followed by TRAJAN and SEXTUS. TITUS prepares a drink with a powder from a ring, taking water from the impluvium.

Go! Tranquillius, bring physicians, quickly! Here is some relief.

Exit TRANQUILLIUS at the top of his speed, upper right. TITUS gives his father the drink which he has prepared.

VESPASIAN.

Oh take me to my Sabine home, for there I shall be safe;

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

59

1300

The oracles have said I am to die in Rome.

Exeunt VESPASIAN, PLINY and TACITUS, upper right. The women are gathered about that entrance. Enter TRAJAN, middle left, followed by SEXTUS carrying a roll of papers.

TRAJAN.

These papers have been found on Aulus' person.

TITUS.

SEXTUS hands him the papers.

Thou hast proved thyself my friend.

A speech to be delivered to the guards.

The Prætorians here are promised heavy sums,

When Aulus sits upon my father's throne.

The Jewess knew!

We're tangled in the toils of some wide-spread conspiracy.

Go !Trajan, go! Divide the guards!

Some to the palace here, some to patrol the streets!

First! have Aulus executed, where he stands.

A silence. Exit SEXTUS, middle left. TITUS reads the second paper. The footfalls of SEXTUS and the rattle of the parchment are the only sounds. Presently a loud cry from AULUS, within; then a brief silence, broken by the sound of a falling body. Exeunt the women, upper right. Re-enter SEXTUS, middle left. Exit TRAJAN, upper left.

A roll of traitors names; of men esteemed our friends.

To the deepest dungeons of the Mamertine,

1313

With the last name listed here.

Exeunt JUVENAL, DOMITIAN and KLABO, upper right. Enter GAUDENTIUS, disordered, lower right.

GAUDENTIUS.

Oh Cæsar! they have dragged thy wife away!

Outside the palace gates, two crowds set on with clubs

And bruised me thus, while she was carried off.

TITUS.

Come Sextus, come, with all our speed to Livia's rescue.

Thou, Gaudentius, guide us as thou lovest thy life.

Is Aulus dead?

SEXTUS shows his bloody sword.

You, Casca, take command of all our forces here.

Our father must be guarded on his way.

1322

We leave the list with you.

Exeunt, lower right, all except TITUS, CASCA, VARRO and a few soldiers.

Add Pliny's name.

Exit TITUS, lower right.

60 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

CASCA.

Before you take these prisoners
To the Mamertine bring each one here to me.
Wait Varro! bring me Gallus and Demetrius and Graccus first.

Exit VARRO, upper left, followed by CASCA. Enter TRANQUILLIUS, upper right. With great circumspection he proceeds to the left table and is about to pick up the cake which he has admired when APICIUS enters, middle right, in search of food. They are mutually startled and disgusted on discovering each other.

APICIUS.

You're eating, sir!

TRANQUILLIUS.

1328

Sir!

APICIUS.

At the Emperor's board; be off!

TRANQUILLIUS.

Be off! You heard the order and you are not gone.

APICIUS.

I heard the order and I am not gone; what order, clown?

TRANQUILLIUS.

The order was to take up arms against the traitors in the street.

APICIUS.

Eh!

TRANQUILLIUS.

What arms do I see you take up?

APICIUS.

I?

TRANQUILLIUS.

1336

Aye!

APICIUS

I'm not a soldier.

TRANQUILLIUS.

What then might you be?

APICIUS.

I'll have you know that I am something better; a civilian, sir!

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

61

TRANQUILLIUS.

1340 The Emperor desires the best of help;
Civilians are particularly charged to take up arms.

APICIUS.

Eh!

TRANQUILLIUS.

And speedily; be off!

APICIUS.

I've not the bearing of a military man;
I fear I might be in the way.

TRANQUILLIUS.

The enemy's way, no doubt;
A position of great usefulness, you'd stop a dozen spears.

APICIUS.

1348 I?

TRANQUILLIUS.

Aye!

APICIUS.

Say that you've not seen me;
For I fear my health will not permit the sacrifice;
However much it might be to my taste.

He gives TRANQUILLIUS money and is about to go, when MONIDES enters, upper left, carrying a crow impaled on an arrow.

What's this?

MONIDES.

My master sent me word
That you should have the game I killed today.
My luck was bad and this was all I shot.

He offers the crow.

TRANQUILLIUS.

1357 Oh this will suit your taste, oh! oh!

Enter PLINY, JUVENAL and TACITUS, upper right. They conceal themselves behind columns.

APICIUS.

How can I ever come to that?

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TRANQUILLIUS.

Then lose your bet.

APICIUS.

He groans.

Oh do me not this violence! My health will not permit;
Consider that!

TRANQUILLIUS.

He pretends to weep.

1362

We feel for you.

APICIUS.

I'm sure of it,

And never was I cold when sympathy was shown.

Come, toss this thing away; here's something to enjoy,

Two hundred new sestertii apiece.

They refuse.

'T will buy at least a fourth your freedom, fool.

They accept. MONIDES throws the crow upper middle.

Diplomacy's a noble art; it hath protected thee, good friend.

He caresses his abdomen.

A load is off my mind.

He sees that the crow is still in view.

Oh throw it out, entirely out!

TACITUS discovers himself to them.

TACITUS.

1371

Diplomacy, Apicius, is a noble art.

PLINY appears.

PLINY.

The culinary arts are quite surpassed.

JUVENAL appears and picks up the crow.

JUVENAL.

Oh what a load is taken off thy mind.

Thou Monides; I took thee for an honest slave.

MONIDES.

And so I am. I knew that you were there

And so I made the trade.

I felt your presence as a faithful dog would do;

1378

And so entrapped the fellow, here.

APICIUS.

Degraded villain! it was I who laid the plot,

Intending to inform your master of your base behavior.

1381 I alone perceived that they were hidden there.

JUVENAL.

You felt our presence too, no doubt. *Exit MONIDES, upper left, hastily.*

APICIUS.

I knew.

JUVENAL.

We know you knew but how did you find out?

APICIUS.

Oh I found out.

JUVENAL.

Oh you found out,

But tell us now, what sense discovered us to you.

APICIUS.

My nose.

JUVENAL.

1389 Thy nose?

APICIUS.

I smelt you, sirs.

JUVENAL.

A marvelous nose.

APICIUS.

Oh any nose would do for that. I'll eat the crow. *Exit, upper right.*

JUVENAL.

A thing like this would nearly cure Vespasian's pain.

PLINY.

Nay, Juvenal; the sickness now upon him is his last.

TACITUS.

1395 I fear he'll never get beyond the city's walls.

PLINY.

And forming mobs await his death in murderous expectancy.

64 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

TACITUS.

A civil war is bursting in its fury over Rome,
And Lust and Rapine loosen for their horrid work;
1399 Our lives are menaced and our households stand
Unbarred against the sweeping throng!

PLINY.

The slender thread is not yet snapt,
And while the pulse of passion running high
Endangers peace and mocks authority,
If with persuasive eloquence in opposition we unite,
The misery of Rome may even yet be stayed.

JUVENAL.

1406 I have a graver duty here to keep me for a time,

Exeunt PLINY and TACITUS, lower left.

The first soliloquie of Decimus Junius Juvenals.

Poor, feathered blackness, limp and stale,
 Thy life is ended, hope and fear are done;
 Thy lusty throat no more shall split the air,
 Thy mounting flight shall not again enthrall
 The envious eyes of creeping men.
 And thou wast hatched to point our joke.
 Didst ever in thy bold and careless journeys
 Dream they tended here?
 Didst ever think that from thy fate
 A melancholy moral would be drawn?
 Old crow, you laugh at me;
 I see a gleam of humor in that filmy eye.
 Yea! yea! you're wiser now than all mankind,
 For which of us can surely say
 That he'll outlive his mortal frame,
 Though which of us hath not that hope?
 Old crow, you know;
 But a manful price you've paid to learn.

The sound of approaching soldiers is heard. JUVENAL looks out at the several entrances and seeing escape cut off, he conceals himself behind a curtain below middle right.

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Soldiers appear on the right and left. Enter, upper left, CASCA, NARCISSA and BERENICE.

CASCA.

Conceal yourselves on yonder porch and make no outcry
When the cruel Cæsar's will I seemingly obey.

NARCISSA.

Tell her the sacrifice is but a sham,
Gone through for safety's sake.

CASCA.

1429 She could not then pretend the terror
Which the lurking spies of Cæsar must report to him.

BERENICE.

Strike quickly, Casca, and withhold the blow
No longer than it takes to make an opportunity.
This girl is vibrant with suspicion,
She will cry aloud to Cæsars's friends when blood is shed.
Let not the courage of your hand be weakened by compassion.

CASCA.

Have a spy placed near, as I have promised her;
That she may be deceived and hold her tongue;
If accident should thwart our hopes.
For accident and nothing else can stay my purpose.

NARCISSA.

1440 What should make him wish her death?

BERENICE.

Hath it been given yet, to you or me,
To sound the depths of Cæsar's heart?

Exeunt BERENICE and NARCISSA, middle right. Enter, upper left, slaves, carrying fagots.

CASCA.

Pile up the fagots here! Away with them.

The slaves carry away all the couches except one, which remains on the left, and pile the fagots up, below the impluvium, in the form of an altar. CASCA ignites the centre of the top layer with a torch brought by a soldier. Exeunt the slaves. The soldiers stand about the entrances in lounging attitudes. CASCA goes out, upper left, and returns with LIVIA. Her dress shows the effects of rough usage.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

67

LIVIA.

1444

Oh Casca! let me rest again; I'm hurt.
The mobs set on with bloody purposes,
And twice I fell unconscious,
Ere the guard o'ertook us there at Pliny's door.

CASCA.

Dispose yourselves about! upon your lives let no one pass,
And hear no sound that comes out from within.

Exeunt the soldiers with precision, at the several entrances.

LIVIA.

These soldiers are not palace guards!
Was it not safer there at Pliny's house?
Why, did you bring me back?

CASCA.

To answer here in Cæsar's halls,
For thy grave crimes against the state.

LIVIA.

1455

Is this my brother?

CASCA.

Retribution marks thee for his own;
The altar is made ready for the sacrifice.

He slips off his tunic to the waist and crowns himself with a garland of oak leaves, taking it from the altar, which is at his left, he being below the altar, facing the left.

Attempt no violent escape, the entrances are filled with guards;

Nor scream in terror as thy voice would only echo

Down these corridors and bring no help.

Most willingly you came and held not back,

An omen full of confirmation,

Clearing doubts away;

So bow your head for the rite of the salted cake,

And the frankincense and the sacred wine.

He holds a cup in his left hand and bread in his right hand.

LIVIA.

1467

Oh Casca! you---why brother--- oh!
You grip my heart with fear;
This altar with this feeding flame,

68 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

These implements of sacrifice!

*He takes up a knife
and a small axe.*

Oh brother! brother! brother!

Let me live!

1472

Oh let me live a little longer!

Just a day, an hour!

To kill me now without a moment's warning!

Thus to plunge me into darkness

Like a torch blown out at midnight by a gust of wind!

Oh give me, Casca, yet a little time;

A murderer was never hastened to his doom

With such devoted speed.

CASCA.

No murderer did e'er deserve thy swift destruction.

Could an hour avail you aught?

LIVIA.

Oh even be it spent within the shadow of eternity,

There still would be a little of life's sunshine left.

1484

A thought, a dream, a hope might spring

That mercy driven from thy heart by superstition,

Would within that time return.

Why should I die?

What injury have I ever wrought,

To any creature on the earth, much less to thee.

CASCA.

The creatures of the earth condemn thee not;

The gods demand thy death.

Your foul desertion of the sacred fire of Vesta,

And your marriage 'gainst their laws have roused their anger,

And thy life must answer for thy crimes.

LIVIA.

A crime, my brother, was 't a crime

1496

To leave that gloomy, cold, unnatural place?

The sacred fire! it flickers out a dozen times,

Where Romans hear of that calamity but once.

The gods, my brother!

1500 Art thou still so much the child to bow to them?
 If gods exist, through what protection have I lived so long?
 If gods exist, why call they on a human instrument
 When all the majesty of nature's anger
 Waits upon their least command?
 If gods exist, the confines of perdition hold them
 When their tolerance and favor rest upon the deed of murder!
 Casca, played we not together children?
 Did you love me then?
 Were children ever happier?
 In the midst of our delights they took me to that temple,
 Filled my mind with terrible forebodings of the fate I'd meet
 Did I infringe their rules and orders;
 Stifled every pleasure, grimly bound me to their life;
 And thus they consecrated me.
 1515 Oh Casca, thee I dreamed of then,
 And in my heart the only light left was the memory
 Of the pleasures we in lisping years enjoyed.
 I learned the mockery of worship
 And I longed for you to take me out; in vain;
 The years slipped by; in vain!
 Then Titus came and he I loved,
 And he it was who dared
 To take me from this sacred Vesta's temple.
 Did my brother welcome me?
 I found thee stern and cold and unforgiving.
 Casca, search thy soul and know
 Wherein the profit comes before you kill me.
 1528 Casca, is the old love dead?

CASCA.

I hoped that when my sister came to die,
 She'd die with dignity and not in tears.

LIVIA.

Thy treachery where loyalty should glory in his strength,
 Thy cowardice and failure make me weep.

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If Titus knew----

CASCA.

Reproach me not with Titus' name!
Read! read! in her handwriting, as I warned you, see!

LIVIA.

Without confidence.

'536 A forgery.

CASCA.

A forgery! and this, too, is a forgery.
And one shall cure the ills inflicted by the other.

LIVIA.

You are not reluctant.

CASCA.

Knowing thou art guilty, should I be reluctant?
Here in Cæsar's house, upon the scene of Nero's revels,
Here where Claudius died by poison,
Where Tiberius and Caligula did glory in debauchery,
'544 Shall rise a grateful odor to the gods,
And these fair walls we 'll stain with smoky memories,
For here where all your crimes have been committed,
Shall their expiation be.

LIVIA.

Brokenly.

Lift up thy axe and fell me,
Slash thy knife across my throat,
And rip my body up,
Tear out my entrails for thy omens;
Burn me piece by piece,
But know thou, Casca Lentullus,
An omen favorable or a sign auspicious
'555 Thou shalt not discover in thy search;

I am unfitted for thy sacrifice.

*JUVENAL toss-
es the crow out.*

Now Casca! art thou satisfied the time is not yet come?
What priest in Rome would dare to offer up a victim
In the face of such a warning fallen from above?
This sacred bird, so pierced,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

71

1561 Portends disaster if this deed be executed now.

TRAJAN.

Upper right, within.

I will not stand!.... What right have you to bar my way?

A guard! a guard! by whose authority?....

But I am Trajan, his superior in command.

Exit CASCA, upper right. JUVENAL reappears.

JUVENAL.

The fates are thine again!

Now hide thee down this passageway

And come not out until....until

I strike the jar here, twice.

LIVIA.

If Titus calls?

JUVENAL.

1570

Not even then!

I'll find the truth about this forgery,

And if he's innocent, his arm shall strike the blows;

Three times if it be he.

LIVIA.

The hole is deep, it yawns with mystery;

The steps are narrow, slippery and steep.

LIVIA descends into the opening behind the stylobate. JUVENAL extinguishes the fire and lounges against the lower right corner of the altar. CASCA reenters.

JUVENAL.

Friend Casca, how's thy health today?

CASCA.

How came you here?

JUVENAL.

I first put this foot first,

'Then this foot first, and so I came.

1580

A remarkable proceeding was it not?

I think few men could do the thing as well as I,

For of my youth it took me seven years to learn.

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CASCA.

I think few men can lie as well as thou;
And that 's a thing you never had to learn.

JUVENAL.

That capability is inborn in the human race.

CASCA.

1587 You hid behind this curtain, sir!
What disposition have you made of Livia?
Speak or die the death!

JUVENAL.

Oh my dear boy! I'll speak, of course. Pray, calm yourself;
I have no wish to die the death, nor live the death,
Nor have a thing on earth to do with your fine death.
By Jove, I wish that piece of shrouding cloth
Came not so swiftly from the looms of fate.
I hid, of course; you asked me how I came, I told you how,
But when, you did not seem to wish to know.

CASCA.

1596 My sister Livia, where----

JUVENAL.

Translated.

CASCA.

Juvenal, speak the truth!

JUVENAL.

Translated, as I live;

She 's made a member with the supernatural powers above.
Before my terror stricken eyes I saw a spirit,
Clothed in white, descend,
And taking our sweet Livia by the hand;
1604 Through the compluvium they soared,
And quickly vanished in the great blue vault.

He points into the air and they both look up.

CASCA.

And did the spirit's face seem fierce or mild?

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

73

JUVENAL.

'T was mild to milkiness on her; on me it fiercely glared.

CASCA.

1608

You lie, old reprobate!

JUVENAL.

And you lack dignity, my virtuous friend.

CASCA.

She's hid about these entrances.

Her guards, draw in;

Let not a soul slip by you!

We will see if thou hast spoke the truth.

Guards appear at all the entrances.

JUVENAL.

The sole and only mistress of my tongue is lovely truth.

CASCA.

Here come two women, they may throw some light

1616

Upon these mysteries. Withdraw! *Exeunt the soldiers, on the left.*

JUVENAL.

Investigate to suit yourself;

I'll not remain to hear my word impugned.

Exit JUVENAL, lower right. Enter BERENICE, middle right, followed by NARCISSA.

BERENICE.

To CASCA.

Translated! yea, translated!

Foolish boy, she's in some passage!

You are standing o'er a stairway now.

He moves.

Narcissa thinks you went too far.

CASCA.

You overheard?

NARCISSA.

Quite plainly,

1625

But you put her far too much in terror.

CASCA.

It was necessary; saw you not the spy?

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BERENICE.

You fooled him well.

NARCISSA.

She still believes you were in earnest.

CASCA.

You must go to her at once, induce her to come out;
I'll hide her safely, till the danger's past;
For I've done all that Cæsar can demand;
As such an omen would delay the mightiest enterprise.

NARCISSA.

¹⁶³³ I'll lose myself and never find her.

BERENICE.

I will be your guide and when she's found
My presence you need not betray;
She fears me----

NARCISSA.

So do I. You play with us.
Explain why you should have a good design,
And not an evil one.

BERENICE.

To gain your lover's friendship, then,
When he in favor basks again,
And Titus hath been cured of his delusion,
I will have an ally in my plea for pension.
I am growing old; my lengthening days
Require provision and support;
Of Cæsar I have asked a mountain
¹⁶⁴⁷ That I may be favored with a hill.

NARCISSA.

If this proves not the truth, I'll ask you why.

Exit NARCISSA, middle right.

BERENICE.

With Livia, your cowardice and failure make me weep;

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

75

Hath not the time for action come?
Be careful, Casca; here your danger lies;
Her heart is like a curdling milk
And sourly will she serve you in the end.

*Exit BERENICE, middle right. Enter VARRO, lower left, with
DEMETRIUS, GALLUS and GRACCUS.*

VARRO.

The chief conspirators.

CASCA.

1655 The fortunes of the hour
Have placed your lives in Cæsar's hands,
And painful shall you find his grasp.
The fate of Aulus, dead in yonder hall,
By Titus' order, but by my design,
For he had falsely promised your allegiance to me,
Must show you where you stand;
Without a hope--unless
You favor my ambition for imperial authority.

DEMETRIUS.

We will consider it.

They converse apart.

GRACCUS.

What need of this?

GALLUS.

1666 What better fortune could we wish,
He's wealthy, young and popular,
The multitude will split their throats
When he's declared.

DEMETRIUS.

He may be seeking thus a further proof of guilt;
He may be faithful yet to Flavian rule.

GALLUS.

We'll take an oath.

GRACCUS.

1673 An oath is needless if he's bent upon deceit,

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And needless if we serve a common cause.

DEMETRIUS.

This brief consideration 's all that we require
1676 To place our forces and our lives at your command.
The hour is full, we should not tarry if we'd reap its fruits.

CASCA.

Then each to his plotted work,
To meet at the foot of the hill,
Where I have sent my kinsmen and my friends.

DEMETRIUS.

A signal when to act should be agreed upon.

CASCA.

This ringing vase. I'll strike it twice to bring you up;
Three quick and heavy blows should Titus be destroyed.
1684 Then loose the rabble on the Flavians' friends,
And ere the sun is set another dynasty shall rule in Rome.

Exeunt DEMETRIUS, GALLUS and GRACCUS, lower left; VARRO, middle left, and CASCA, upper left. DOMITIAN looks in, middle right. He enters, followed by KLABO and other slaves carrying immense bundles of manuscripts, which seem weighty. Other slaves with manuscripts enter and cross from time to time.

DOMITIAN.

Come; Klabo, come! we have no time to waste.
I fear some rude conspirator will seize our manuscripts.
We'll rest ourselves in distant safety till the storm is past,
When like an eagle to its prey
We'll sweep down on the upstart head
That arrogantly takes our father's crown.
1692 It makes me laugh to see men storm at Fate,
To see their frantic efforts to attract her predetermined eye;
The fools, they would compel the hour,
But wise men, we will wait.

A quantity of gold spills from one of the manuscripts.

Thou careless dog, these manuscripts
Are not to be so violently thrown about!

The gold is recovered. Exeunt all, lower left.

TRAJAN.

Oh Casca! Casca Lentullus!

Within.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

77

Enter TITUS and GAUDENTIUS, lower right, disguised as old men. Enter TRAJAN and JUVENAL, upper right.

JUVENAL.

Good friends, have you seen Casca Lentullus about?

TRAJAN.

1700 Oh Juvenal, that such an upright man,
 From noble parents sprung,
 Should thus forget his loyalty,
 His reputation, honor, prospects, all,
 To sink to plots and subterfuges
 Worthy of an outcast or a slave!

JUVENAL.

With more than your reluctance, Trajan,
Was I made acquainted with his perfidy.

TITUS.

You speak of Casca Lentullus?

JUVENAL.

Can this be Titus?

TRAJAN.

1710 Wearing a plebian's gown.

TITUS.

Friends it is I.

JUVENAL.

Is Cæsar come to this?
Doth he discard his dignity so lightly.

TRAJAN.

Had his friends been called upon and shirked the duty,
Then he might have reason thus to masquerade.

TITUS.

1717 It doth become you little to reproach a man,
 Distract by his intolerable anxiety.

JUVENAL.

Doth it become a Roman,

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Thus to lose his judgement in a sea of grief?

TITUS.

A sea of doubt but not of grief.

You spoke of Casca Lentullus?....

Is't honorable in you to know an enemy of mine,

1723

And then refuse his name?

TRAJAN.

I do not think he is an enemy of yours.

TITUS.

You spoke of Casca. Is it he?

JUVENAL.

It is, unless---

TITUS.

Unless!

JUVENAL.

You signed this tablet knowingly.

TITUS.

I signed a tablet but I trusted him and did not read it.
Are you sure?

JUVENAL.

The boy is maddened by ambition, see---

TITUS.

No! No! I will not read it!

JUVENAL.

You must not destroy him now.

TITUS.

Destroy him now! I could embrace him,

1735

I could shake him thus for joy! *He shakes JUVENAL.*

Destroy the youth! Would you destroy

The giver of all happiness?

Oh, like a father's to the erring prodigal,

My heart goes out to him!

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

79

No name in Rome could fall more sweetly on my ears
To be thus coupled with an accusation.
Anger would have kindled in my breast
Had any other man presumed so much,
And in my strength I would have smote him down,
1745 But Casca! Casca! glorious traitor!
Thou hast paid for all thy deeds with this defection.
No! No! I will not read it!
I must find my wife! Gaudentius, come, come, come!
By no good fortune has she gotten back?

JUVENAL.

He straightens his shoulders.

She has returned.

He avoids TITUS' grasp.

TITUS.

Where is she now?

JUVENAL points to the jar, into which TITUS thrusts his arm, whereupon JUVENAL, by a gesture, has him strike it three blows with the flat of his sword. LIVIA enters from behind the stylobate. She hesitates but recognizes TITUS in his disguise and they embrace. Cries are heard in the distance. Exit JUVENAL, upper right and TRAJAN, upper left. The cries continue, drawing nearer. They reenter.

JUVENAL.

Ah Titus, save your love thoughts for a timelier hour;
A threatening mob is loose and soldiers make up part of it.

TRAJAN.

1754 Bestow your wife here in the passageway again,
Resume your habit and come forth;
Your father's throne is shaken on its eminence.

TITUS.

My friends exaggerate the danger.
Hath the shallow sounds of idle boys,
The power to fill your hearts with dread?

TRAJAN.

These sounds are deep, they come from desperate men,
For all the traitors down on Aulus' list
Are now allied with Casca.

1764 When they find you in plebian garb,
Unarmed and unaccompanied,

80 **THE IMPERIAL AUTHORITY**

You will answer for your folly with your life.

TITUS.

Then out among the crowds with legionaries, Trajan!

Use what measures seem expedient

Against the threatening hour.

You, Juvenal, with Tacitus and Pliny too,

1770 I ask your eloquence in smoothing down

The ruffling temper of the streets.

Exit TRAJAN, upper left.

LIVIA.

'Tis safe for me within the hole?

JUVENAL.

And come not out till Danger flaps

Her ominous wings in other skies.

Exit LIVIA, after embracing TITUS.

And Titus, should you fall into the hands of hostile guards,

On no account make known your name

1777 For it will surely prove the warrant of your death.

Exit JUVENAL, lower right. Enter BERENICE, middle right.

TITUS.

The cries are growing bolder,

Make yourself secure within the stone.

GAUDENTIUS.

When you are safe.

TITUS.

My safety, what is that to thee?

GAUDENTIUS.

Art thou not Cæsar, owe I not allegiance to the lord of Rome?

TITUS.

You did not always show this loyalty.

GAUDENTIUS.

1784

I served a higher master, and

I did not know you as I know you now.

In this brief time, amid the shock of circumstance,

The noble metal of your character rings true and strong;

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

81

In serving you I serve the King of Kings
As best he may be served by me;
And if this prove thy hour of need,
My strength is thine.

Enter VARRO, on the right, with soldiers.

VARRO.

Detain the two old men; forbid the mob!

Enter SEXTUS, on the left, with soldiers.

With me you are for Casca?

SEXTUS.

1794 I will serve him well. *Aside.* I'll serve him well.

VARRO.

What enemies of his have you brought in?

SEXTUS.

I've caught Gaudentius' wife and with her some young babe.

TITUS.

To GAUDENTIUS.

Your wife took Livia's child?

He assents.

VARRO.

Where found you them?

SEXTUS.

In Pliny's house.

VARRO.

1800 In Pliny's house! Why entering his door

I found the Empress Livia herself.

Oh Pliny hath his polished way with womankind;

I'll warrant he'll not be forgot when times are good again.

TITUS' jealousy is roused again. GAUDENTIUS has been taken to the left. BERENICE comes forward.

BERENICE.

Nor even yet while times are bad will precious Pliny be forgot.

Stay Varro, with your men stand off a little while.

Proud Cæsar, now the scale

Of Justice tilts against your tyranny,

A moment since I stood a suppliant;

You turned your shoulder to my tears;

1810

But now your life hangs on my word

82 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

And when I call the soldiers back,
They 'll lead you off to death.

TITUS.

Then call them back.

BERENICE.

Still scornful, still as proud as in thy might.
And so I'd have the man I love,
For I have never ceased to love thee, Titus,
Never thought of any other---

TITUS.

1818

Well! well!

BERENICE.

I have grim news, oh Titus!
Grim, knee shaking news for thee;
Thy friends have all gone o'er to Casca's side,
And he, by acclamation, now is emperor, succeeding you.
His deep designs include your death
And Livia's sacrifice; and Numa's death,
When he finds out you have an heir.
Both I and Livia's friend Narcissa,
We have helped him in his schemes
And now we have you in our power.

1828

TITUS.

I still have friends, and strength.

BERENICE.

But not to rescue thee from Casca's toils.
The palace fills with partisans of his;
This wife, though she escape him once,
Will now be offered up a sacrifice,
While on a spear your head
With set and glassy eyes will bob alike,
To friends once faithful and to foes victorious.
1837 I love you still, let me prove traitor to his cause,
And you will be Augustus;

Promise me that you will love me as of old,
 And I will get you through his lines
 And lay a dagger in his sides to silence him.
 But I must have your love.
 Deliver up this faithless wife;
 The child you may retain.
 I offer you my love and Rome.

1844

TITUS.

The soldiers.

BERENICE.

Varro!

He advances.

TITUS.

Soldiers, take me where you will,
 This woman here is done with me.

SEXTUS has MARTHA brought in, at the left. She is carrying NUMA.

BERENICE.

1850 To death with him! And send that woman, too.

Exeunt VARRO, TITUS, GAUDENTIUS and certain of the soldiers, upper left.

SEXTUS.

Though Varro takes thy orders, thrust them not on me.

BERENICE.

Delay my pleasure at your peril, sir!

Exeunt, lower left, all except BERENICE. She knocks on the floor near the stylobate and conceals herself on the left. NARCISSA and LIVIA enter from behind the stylobate. The cries continue.

LIVIA.

The cries! the cries! They battle in the street!
 The mob will sweep the palace for they win the day.

NARCISSA.

1855 No! no! this is not war; 'tis but a tumult
 Titus hath himself stirred up,
 To justify his monstrous judgement 'gainst yourself.

LIVIA.

Why should my husband have to justify himself for any deed?

84 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

NARCISSA.

You questioned him when he would bring the Jewess back.

LIVIA.

Ah that 's a plot of Casca's, Titus sent her off.

NARCISSA.

Perhaps he did. Entrust yourself to Casca,
Dread your husband till the doubt is cleared away.

LIVIA.

Go bring my husband, and my brother, too,
1864 By seeing them together I may learn the truth.

Exit NARCISSA, middle right.

The cries! the cries! Oh where is Numa in this turmoil?

Is he safe, or even yet alive?

Oh have I merited these charging woes?

Oh Numa! Numa! *Enter MARTHA, with NUMA, lower left, followed by SEXTUS.*

Martha! he 's asleep! asleep, oh gentle softness.

Rest, my Numa, rest and dream of love and happiness.

Oh exquisite, most marvelous little being, *She takes the child.*

Mine! mine, mine again to love!

You've brought him safely back.

MARTHA.

But not to safety; I am taken by the soldiers,

Brought against my will. *SEXTUS and BERENICE move forward.*

LIVIA.

1876 Centurion Sextus brought you back?

I've heard my husband speak of thee

In terms of highest praise; I thank thee much.

BERENICE.

You thank too soon for Sextus serves on Casca's side.

LIVIA.

On Casca's side?

BERENICE.

I do not gloss my hatred

With the loathsome pigments of hypocrisy;
 From me you'll have the biting truth:
 Your brother covets the imperial purple,
 He commands the hostile troops and rouses up the mob;
 He thinks the gods will favor him if you are sacrificed,
 And craftily he plotted to that end
 1888 While Titus still was powerful;
 And though his courage failed,
 His purpose still for satisfaction calls.
 Your husband's love is always yours.

LIVIA.

I thank thee, woman, much for that.

BERENICE.

Again, you thank too soon,
 For though he still is true, his power is gone,
 And Casca's warrant for his death is given out.

LIVIA questions, and SEXTUS and MARTHA assent.

LIVIA.

Oh Sextus, you the valiant soldier,
 Stand unharmed and he goes out to death!
 The meshes of adversity, they sift our friends and few we hold.

BERENICE.

And fortunate you are, if tangling in the stinging threads,
 1900 Your life is not cut through.
 When Casca comes again,
 A victim to his superstitious rage you fall;
 I hate you but I still have pity;
 Go to him, resign your life, to save your son,
 For if you do the boy shall safely grow in Martha's care;
 Delay and take his life,
 As you do murder those despairing wretches in the streets,
 By hiding here.

LIVIA.

The cries! the cries!
 1910 Oh fearful hour that makes my happiness

86 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

The instrument of death;
 That drives me to the final brink,
 Amid the mortal sounds of battle's violence!
 Have mercy, oh you dreadful arbiters!
 Numa! Numa! guard him well,
 1916 And from the other shore I'll intercede for you.
She is about to go out, upper left, when CASCA enters, lower right, accompanied by soldiers.

CASCA.

Wait! wait! thou'rt caught at last!

BERENICE.

We have persuaded her that it is best
 To give herself to thee.

CASCA.

Most timely hath she been persuaded,
 When the last escape is closed.

BERENICE.

1922 Your star is rising, Casca; you'll remember me?

CASCA.

My gratitude shall be proportioned to your own deserts.

BERENICE.

Then know that Titus is your prisoner;
 That Varro just now led him off,
 Gaudentius is the other; both are in disguise.
 This information clears your way of every obstacle.

CASCA.

Have Varro bring his prisoners back.

BERENICE so directs and two soldiers go out, upper left.

Withdraw! forbid the entrance here of any one;
 1930 Heed not what passes in this hall!

Exeunt all except CASCA and LIVIA; BERENICE and MARTHA going out upper right. CASCA replenishes the smouldering fire which has been growing from the embers left by JUVENAL.

LIVIA.

I see into the depths of thy remorseless heart;
 I know the full design of thy far reaching perfidy;

1933 But happily I know that Casca's hand
 And Casca's superstition murder me,
 And not my husband's. Fate,
 Through some mischance, hath given thee the power
 To put in execution thy fell purposes;
 But Casca, now I warn thee,
 Stay the course of thy unbridled passion,
 Lest upon the summit of thy greatness and thy might,
 The force of thy tempestuous rise,
 Shall fling thee o'er the peak,
 Into the stony lap of waiting death.

CASCA.

The altar is made ready.

LIVIA.

Strike! *A cry comes from the infant, within.*

CASCA.

1946 Return! return! *The several persons reenter.*
 What noise was that?

SEXTUS.

We do not know.

The infant, in MARTHA'S arms, cries again. HYPOKRATES enters, lower right.

CASCA.

Whose child is this? You will not tell? *To the women.*
 Hypokrates, whose child is this?

HYPOKRATES.

My art is so bound up in divination of momentous deeds
 That I have time for no such trifles, sire, as this;
 I paint huge pictures, not small signs.

CASCA.

But if this child is proven Livia's, will the gods be pleased
 1955 To have me offer it and spare its mother?
HYPOKRATES takes two doves from his breast.

HYPOKRATES.

Sire, the omens are most favorable to this procedure.

88 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

Offer up the infant, then await a further portent
For the mother's disposition, which I think will be,
The way to please the gods the best of all.

BERENICE moves away.

CASCA.

Stay Berenice, tell me one thing more, whose child is this?

BERENICE.

I'm done! Unfortunate hour that claimed the noble Aulus!
Opportunity a second time, intrudes upon thy dreams;
1963 Unwelcome visitor! unready host!
Irresolution, thou art doomed to failure!
Heavily the gates of Rome shall close upon me,
Wearisome the journey hence.

BERENICE goes out, lower right.

CASCA.

Whose child is this? You will not tell?

He takes the infant from MARTHA and at his motion a soldier is about to plunge a knife through her hand:

LIVIA.

The child is mine.

MARTHA.

She seeks to shield me from your anger,
I'll admit the child is mine.

LIVIA.

The child is truly mine.

CASCA.

The thing is well supplied with mothers now.
1973 I must find out whose child it is. *Both try to take it.*
Your wagging tongues may lie but on my honor
Here is testimony not to be denied.

With a sudden motion he tears open LIVIA'S dress; striking her bosom.

This withered hag, let her be crucified for her deceit.

Give me this mooted babe!

SEXTUS has been holding it.

Hypokrates, we'll offer up this infant in the public view,
And then the woman, thus to finally appease
The great displeasure of the gods.
Let her be crucified!

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

89

LIVIA.

1982

How fearful is this penalty!
How slight the provocation!
Casca, wait, consider---

CASCA.

Let the woman die!

LIVIA.

Oh pitiless and wanton arbiter!
What ruin shall appal thee?
What extremity of desolation shall appease thy appetite?
What punishment can Fate apportion to thy infamy?

MARTHA.

1990

God's will is manifest in every word and deed,
In nature's every act; would you implore the flood,
Or bear resentment 'gainst the shrivelling flame?
His hidden purposes they mutely serve;
His will is not opposed by thy command.
My life is freely His.

Exit MARTHA in custody, upper left.

LIVIA.

Casca! Casca! Casca! give me back the boy,
Oh spare his innocence and I will build the altar up again,
I'll fan the flame and plead with you to hurry through the rites;
1999 I'll turn the knife upon myself,
And as you search me for the omens,
I will beg the gods to bless you with their favors.
Casca! let me kiss him once, once more, my little Numa!

The soldiers hold LIVIA. Exit CASCA, lower right, with the infant; HYPOKRATES and some of the soldiers following. The soldiers remaining arrange themselves about the several entrances.

Oh Numa! Numa! Numa!

NARCISSA enters, lower right.

Narcissa!

NARCISSA.

Kill me Livia! end remorse!

Oh let me feel that I have answered
2007 For the sorrows I have heaped upon you, love.

90 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

LIVIA.

Are you to blame?

NARCISSA.

I have betrayed you,
Brought you from the safe recesses of the passageways.

LIVIA.

2011 They've taken Numa for a sacrifice.

NARCISSA.

He's gone to lift the child upon a spear,
To show the mob how he's appeased the gods.
I thought when I persuaded you, it was for safety's sake,
For Casca made most honied promises,
And swore with many an oath that his anxiety for you
Was caused by love and hope of safety for you both.

Give me the knife!

And let me drown remorse

With blood in retribution shed!

Oh let me teach this monster how

2022 To follow in the paths of treachery!

Oh let me teach him how revenge

Is fathered by injustice,

How destruction from destruction gathers power,

How deceit brings forth deceit,

And desolation answers desolation's call.

Exit NARCISSA, lower right. Enter, upper left, VARRO and soldiers, with TITUS and GAUDENTIUS. LIVIA, before the impluvium, is weeping,

GAUDENTIUS.

Take comfort; Martha saw us as she passed,

2029 And she goes bravely to her great reward.

Enter SEXTUS and two soldiers, lower right.

VARRO.

Who knows the emperor's commands?

SEXTUS.

The emperor directs

That one of these your prisoners be executed,

While the other one goes free; the woman,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

91

2035 She shall be delivered to the populace,
 And burned for their amusement.
 Titus is the prisoner to die, Gaudentius is to live.
The emperor directs that you acknowledge his command.

VARRO.

 Is one of them the Flavian prince?
Go Quintus, tell the emperor I have his wish,
 And it shall be my deed. *A soldier goes*
 But these are bearded men. *out, lower right.*

SEXTUS.

Oh that need not delay the execution of the guilty one.
He pulls off their beards.

VARRO.

But which is Titus?

SEXTUS.

2044 You should know.

VARRO.

I don't see how? Gaudentius' name I never heard before,
 And I am newly come to Rome.

SEXTUS.

But you and I have fought in Titus' ranks,
And we should know our old commander's face.
 Methinks that this is Titus.

VARRO.

No! no, this is he!

SEXTUS.

 You are mistaken,
This is Titus; know I not that brow?

*SEXTUS and TITUS are on the left. SEXTUS
purposely contends that GAUDENTIUS is TITUS.*

VARRO.

2053 And know I not these heavy jaws?

SEXTUS.

You but a moment since declared you could not tell.

92 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

VARRO.

But that's too old a man.

SEXTUS.

Nay, Titus, sir, is thirty nine.

VARRO.

Let's kill them both and thus make sure.

SEXTUS.

Make sure we would of execution for ourselves.
Gaudentius is the architect, he builds the Colosseum, yonder;
Casca would make little bits of us if we harmed him.

VARRO,

We might delay until---

SEXTUS.

2062 His orders were explicit;
When he spoke he struck his hand.

VARRO.

Stay! Livia is Titus' wife, and she shall tell us.
Woman! Guards, make ready!
Woman, you will now go forth to death;
So kiss your husband, say farewell,
And waste no time in tears.

LIVIA.

I thank you. Titus.

He turns from her.

Titus!

He pushes her away.

Titus, in the hour of death
You turn away, you push me off,
Tear out the very tendrils of affection,
Let me fall to wither and consume,
To vanish like a broken vine upon the flame.

2076

Oh Titus, have I lost your love?

The soldiers take her out, upper right. TITUS turns, after she is gone. JUVENAL enters, middle right, and stands, in speculation. The soldiers gather near the centre.

TITUS.

I am ready, sirs, to die.

GAUDENTIUS.

Nay, I am Titus; I will not allow
This man to sacrifice himself when I care naught for life.

VARRO.

2080 The woman told us, as I thought she'd do.

SEXTUS.

Oh simple Varro, she had heard our argument; she kissed the
man who's not her husband, so, to now outwit her, we must
kill the other one.

VARRO.

Oh simple Sextus, thinking to outwit a woman's wit! She
knew we'd say that we must kill the other one, and so she
kissed her husband, knowing that we would destroy the
other one; and therefore we must kill the one she kissed.

SEXTUS.

Oh much more simple Varro, she did know that after we had
said: "She kissed the man who's not her husband," we'd
reflect that she had truly kissed her husband, thus to put
us off the trail. She knew we then would see her subtlety,
and so to get the better of us when we had, she kissed the
one who's not her husband; now, to finally come out ahead,
it doth behoove us to despatch the other one.

VARRO.

Oh Sextus! Sextus! see you not that she knew we would know
all this, and knowing we would know that she knew we
would know, she knew we'd know.... Sextus, which of us
can be the greater fool?

SEXTUS.

2099 Undoubtedly yourself.

VARRO.

Nay! nay! she kissed her husband, since she knows she is to
live. With Titus dead, her path to Pliny's house will be
much straiter than it is just now.

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SEXTUS.

Ah Varro, knowing we knew this, she kissed Gaudentius, thinking we would think that if she kissed her husband truly, we would think her subtle, and awkwardly destroy her husband's counterpart. It doth behoove us much to let our wishes flow with hers and kill the other man.

VARRO.

Ah ha! I have thee Sextus, now! A moment since you said she wished her husband spared, and therefore did just what she did; and now you say in wishing Titus dead, she did just what she did; which latter thing is just exactly what she did in scheming for his preservation. How then can you say that she would act the same, from reasons so opposed.

SEXTUS.

Ah ha! I have thee Sextus, now! Why you yourself at first declared she kissed her husband to deceive us, then you said she kissed him so that we would not be fooled and now you turn on me with triumph in your eye for saying she would act the same from different motives when your own assertions of equivalent effect are scarcely cold upon your lips.

VARRO.

2121

I give a woman up.

SEXTUS.

There's nothing else for any man to do.

VARRO.

We have not carried out his orders yet.

SEXTUS.

We'll toss a coin and let the fates decide.

VARRO.

I hear you talk.

SEXTUS.

If heads, this man is Titus,

2127 Tails, and this man here is not friend Titus.

He first points to GAUDENTIUS, then to TITUS. VARRO does not notice the quibble.

Heads! So this is Titus!

VARRO.

Destiny hath shortened thy allotted span,
But happily for thee her call comes not before thy readiness.

At his motion the soldiers gather about GAUDENTIUS and presently leave him dead upon the couch.

Let us announce the news that Casca now
Holds undisputed sway, that all the Flavians are dead.

Exeunt VARRO and soldiers, upper right.

SEXTUS.

Ah Titus!

His courage ebbs.

TITUS.

Thou art now a Roman general.

SEXTUS.

2135

If Casca wins?

TITUS.

No! Sextus, no! That shall he never do!

Give me your armor and your sword,

And tremble not, that failure was at hand;

The gods did put you here to meet this danger,

Knowing you alone could face the peril of the hour.

But Sextus, there are legions full of younger brothers

To yourself, beyond the gates of Rome, and in Rome, too,

And we shall show this boy how wars are waged,

And battles won and lost!

Go down into the streets and guide the cohorts of my friends;

For Trajan now must have the city guard well on the way.

With this brave armor buckled on, each finger feels a legion;

Single handed I could meet a company,

And with ten such men as Sextus

2150

I could overcome an army

Of the traitors Casca leads!

Exeunt TITUS and SEXTUS, upper right and upper left. JUVENAL approaches the body of GAUDENTIUS.

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The second folylogue of Decimus Junius Juvenalys.

Good friend of Rome, thou too, hast paid
The final penalty; thy life hath answered
To the stern demands of circumstance;
Levelled by the great equation down with
Nero's dust and these fast stiffening wings,
No better now, no worse than they;
Three grains of sand upon the fearful stretches
Of eternity. Oh worthy man, who stood a hero but
A moment gone, who lies neglected now forevermore,
Could those dull eyes flash forth a fire,
Could those set lips give out a cry,
My friend, what wouldst thou say?
Wouldst thou not rue the impulse
Which hath brought thee down?
The foolish thought that sacrifice
Had knocked upon thy door?
The foolish dream that men would care?
The world heeds not, nor hath a feeling left,
For those who fall. It holds no helping hand
Out to the swimmer spent, it lifts
No crushing burden from the sinking back, nor speeds
The feeble youth upon his unaccustomed way.
It eats your soul and roughly throws the husk aside,
It knows not you have lived and cares not you have died.
A turmoil; hateful, noisy;
Flies a buzzing in their busy orbits,
Ceasing not, insensate, merciless.
Oh costly dead, these fretful miseries thou hast
Left behind; I see thee on a splendid summit,
Far above the trivial doings of the multitude,
The meaningless and vapid circles of the senseless crowd.

JUVENAL has thrown a robe over the body. A noise, within, is increasing. Exit JUVENAL, lower right. Enter a mob, with LIVIA, upper left, followed by VARRO and a few idle soldiers.

2183

THE FIRST PLEBIAN.

Here! here! we'll burn her here!

A young man.

THE SECOND PLEBIAN.

So bind her quick and bring
Dry boughs from far and near.

An older man.

THE THIRD PLEBIAN.

Pile up the wood, a ring!
Oh what a lovely sight,
To see her body, white,
Grow black with fire and scar!
And scar! and scar! and scar!

An aged man.

*His voice is shrill and his
speeches are full of nerve.*

THE FIRST PLEBIAN.

Tear off her rage, her rage!

*The two men stand at the lower left part of the
apartment. They pull her wrists off and tear
her clothing where it is not protected by the ropes.*

THE SECOND PLEBIAN.

Oh give me here a stick,
To draw the rope, it sags.

2184

THE THIRD PLEBIAN.

Oh bring a torch, quick, quick!
For ere the brewing storm,
With clouds hath time to form,
She dies the death of hags,
Of hags! of hags! of hags!

THE FIRST PLEBIAN.

Bring on more pine and oak!

VARRO.

Take care, this hall with fire
You'll stain, and black with smoke.

THE SECOND PLEBIAN.

Herein shall be her pyre,
This spot her monument.

2185

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The THIRD PLEBIAN.

To hell she shall be sent,
And in the smoke she'll choke;
And choke! and choke! and choke!

The FIRST PLEBIAN.

She killed her babe, her own.

The SECOND PLEBIAN.

And broke her sacred oath;
So let her moan and moan.

The THIRD PLEBIAN.

She'll answer now for both!
The torch! the torch! the torch!
Oh let her scorch and scorch,
And cry aloud and groan,
And groan! and groan! and groan!

2212

Enter TITUS, upper left.

TITUS.

Away! away! away! ye fools and madmen!
Stand, yea stand, and meet
The fierce displeasure of the emperor!
Vespasian lives and Titus was not slain;
Here from the portico you see them sweeping up the hill.
The upstart Casca, like a dog, lies dying in the sun.
Away! away! to meet and honor their return!

The mob goes out, upper left.

LIVIA.

2222

Oh let us seek the shelter of our friends.

TITUS.

Doth safety lie in Pliny's house?

LIVIA.

I fear the mob's return.

TITUS.

Unfaithful woman, well you may,
For when it comes again,
It comes in anger to destroy us both;

2228

And welcome shall its fury be.

Enter NARCISSA, middle right.

NARCISSA.

Why stay you here? The mob comes back!
The trick was worthy of a fruitful mind and well it worked;
But now you idly stand and let these moments,
 Gifted with long years slip by!
Think you no more of life, nor of revenge?
For Casca hath accomplished his design,
And on a spear I saw the infant borne.

TITUS.

My son hath been discovered?

NARCISSA.

Yea, and murdered!

TITUS.

Woman! could you not have spared the boy?
Was't not enough to plot against the peace of Rome?
2240 Against my father's life? Against my honor?
Was it not enough to leave thy husband's house?

NARCISSA.

Stop! stop! a monster, thou,
To hold suspicion up to her,
To virtue's last embodiment.

TITUS.

Her last indeed, for with this failure,
Virtue's inconceivable attempt to form a woman
With her own perfections, in despair is given up.

LIVIA.

Oh Titus, thus you hold me in your high regard,
And thus you cast reproach when I am guiltless, love.

NARCISSA.

2250 Escape! escape! the mob returns!
I see the distant dust of friendly hoofs,
A moment's safety and the danger's past!
L. & C.

100 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

TITUS.

You see the distant dust of friendly hoofs indeed,
For swiftly do they fly from Rome.
The day is lost, my love is bitten and my courage gone;
The growing noises of the vengeful mob,
Fall sweetly on my ears;
They promise much.

*Enter SEXTUS, VARRO
and the mob, on the left.*

The FIRST PLEBIAN.

2259

He's here upon the spot!

*They bind TITUS to the lower right impluvium
post. SEXTUS forces TITUS' helmet down over
his face, thus concealing his identity from the mob.*

The SECOND PLEBIAN.

The lying knave, I think
We'll send him on a trot---

The THIRD PLEBIAN.

With her to hell to stink,
And writhe and curse, so haste,
And give them here a taste,
Of fire, and smoke that's hot!
That's hot! that's hot! that's hot!

Enter CASCA, accompanied by soldiers, lower right.

VARRO.

Most august emperor, give us leave
To burn these two together, here.

CASCA.

We'll watch the sport ourselves.

NARCISSA.

2270

Oh Casca, are the gods not satisfied?

A noise of distant hoofbeats, within.

VARRO.

What noise is that?

CASCA.

The thunder rolls, proceed!
The rain will quench your fire.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

101

VARRO.

Pile up the wood and bring a torch!

NARCISSA.

2275

You promised me.

VARRO.

Methinks I hear that noise again.

Enter JUVENAL, upper right.

JUVENAL.

And so you do!

Ten cohorts of the faithful horse,

Come coursing down the Appian way!

Now Casca, call thy traitors to thy aid,

For in this hour you face destruction and defeat.

The loyal troops are sweeping home! *He waves his robe.*

CASCA.

Bring up the legions, let the first three turn the flank,

2284 And trap this group of horsemen in the street.

Exeunt several soldiers.

JUVENAL.

Oh Casca, bid your men desist! Rush not to death,

But make your peace with Titus while you can.

CASCA.

Old dotard, you endanger life, with such advice.

JUVENAL.

Think not to frighten me, young Casca;

Know that Stoics such as I,

Fear not the gods themselves, much less the puny man,

Who hath no stronger threat to make than merely death.

TRAJAN enters, upper right, followed by many soldiers.

TRAJAN.

Stand! Casca Lentullus;

In Cæsar's name I take thee into custody;

2294

Release his wife and offer no resistance,

At the peril of thy life.

102 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

CASCA.

And have you warrant, Trajan, to arrest a legion?

TRAJAN.

Ten of them, if they have proved themselves
Unworthy of the honor Rome bestows upon their heads,
In making them her warriors.

CASCA.

2300 You say you have authority from Titus?

TRAJAN.

Aye, and from Vespasian, too.

CASCA.

Then is your warrant void;
For I, by right of arms, am now become
Secundus Casca Lentullus Augustus, Emperor of Rome,
And all commands and orders relative to Rome,
And to the government of all the world,
Must emanate from me, and no one else.

2309 Send back your men from Rome,
The proclamation hath been made,
That Casca now is emperor;
For Titus Flavius lies
In yonder sand pit, dead.

SEXTUS.

Wait! Casca! wait! what man is this,
If he be not the noble Titus Flavius, sirs?

SEXTUS discloses TITUS' face. They fall back. A silence ensues.

TRAJAN.

How have you dared this ignominious usage?

VARRO is about to apply the torch.

SEXTUS.

2318 Varro, when hath Titus been unjust to you?
Doth he deserve this death, that you should
With such haste apply the torch?

VARRO.

Why Sextus, you did just now gamble with me for his life.

SEXTUS.

I tricked you then and saved him,
 For I played the traitor's part but lived it not;
 And you have told your friend that Titus hath been killed,
 But now he sees that Titus lives, and when he's dead,
 What will protect poor Varro from
 2325 This new made god's revenge?
 Desert the traitor!
 Call upon your friends and Titus will forgive. *A silence.*

CASCA.

You see that Varro is a man of wisdom, do you not?
 He hath no liking for a sinking ship;
 Nor none of you, methinks, are Titus' friends;
 You fear the fellow.

TRAJAN.

Insolence!

TITUS.

2333 Subdue your swords my friends, I wish to die.

TRAJAN.

Then let us die together fighting, as all Roman soldiers should.

TITUS.

I wish my friends to live.

CASCA.

And Titus, I, in memory of old favors done,
 Will give them all an opportunity:
 Lay down your arms and call me emperor,
 And you shall live in peace.

TRAJAN.

Doth this include Vespasian and the greedy son, Domitian,
 Just now fled with half the gold in Rome? *He draws his sword.*

TITUS.

Stay Trajan, seek not with such fervent deeds,
 To bind yourself to me; I wish to die,
 2344 And Casca now hath made an offer,

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Which I hope my friends will not reject.
Lucretius, thou whose brother led
A desperate charge against Jerusalem;
Sextus, thou whose brother died
A soldier's death within those well defended walls;
You seasoned veterans,
Who have tramped with me in many a hard campaign,
If I have left a vestige of my former power,
I here command you, friends and comrades all,
To live and hinder not
2355 The death of him whose part is played.

VARRO.

A horseman comes!

TRAJAN.

We'll let him come and let him go; another step!

VARRO does not light the fyre.

JUVENAL.

Why Titus, must you waste your life?
You owe a higher debt to Rome than to your own desires.

Enter TACITUS, middle right, unobtrusively.

TRAJAN.

2361 Think not, because the weak Prætorian Guards
Have proven false, that all the armies
Of the empire have become his friends!

TACITUS.

Is this the emperor?

SEXTUS.

He hath commanded us to let him die;
He thinks he serves his country best by leaving it.

TRAJAN.

2369 The fifteenth and the fifth,
Why they would gladly die for him!
The Gallic, Cythian, Celtic and Illyrian legions,
All are yours; the Pontic troops,
The Dacian and Germanic veterans, faithful to a man!
Have you no news to alter his determination?

Speak!

SEXTUS.

Withhold thy news no longer.

TRAJAN.

Speak.

TACITUS.

2375 It chokes me quite when added to it
I find Titus bound.

JUVENAL.

He's bound to die.

TACITUS.

Old jester, some day you will crack
The last lash of your scornful whip;
This hour we lay aside our jokes and bow our heads,
For one who's laughed at many a point of thine;
Go to him now, recall thy keenest thrust,
And in thy choicest vein retell the tale,
And see if thou canst move to smiles those setting lips.
2385 Oh Titus, gird your courage up!
Your father, good Vespasian, 's dead in his Sabine home at last.
Arriving there, he took his bed, received his officers,
Attended to the business left; and sinking back,
He felt the chill of dissolution in his veins;
Then, rising up, he called his friends, and with these words:
"A Roman emperor should die erect,"
Your noble father's spirit passed away.

TRAJAN.

Now Titus, you are emperor!
Your word is universal law.

CASCA.

Apply the torch!

NARCISSA.

2396

Oh Casca! wait!

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Hath Titus here not shown himself a worthy Roman?
 He hath offered you his life to save his friends,
 When, as the lightning rives the oak,
 A word would split your green conspiracy.
 But you can prove yourself possessed of more
 Than even his nobility;
 Acknowledge his supremacy again,
 2404 And by this restoration of his power and dignity,
 You'll gain the blessings of your countrymen,
 The long respect of coming ages;
 You will overtop his fame for all eternity;
 And history shall not forget the splendid gift. *CASCA*
laughs.
 Remember then the many promises you've made to me,
 And look upon your sister and repent your deeds in time.
He strikes her.

CASCA.

Away! away!

Enter HYPOKRATES, lower right.

HYPOKRATES.

I will see Casca Lentullus!
 2413 Good emperor, stop this burning here!

CASCA.

Our will depends no more on mystic and capricious augury;
 The weight of our displeasure soon shall fall
 Upon the foolish mortals who opposed our rise;
 Include yourself among the doomed, by further prophecy.

HYPOKRATES.

Desist! desist! these sacred birds have twice refused to eat!

CASCA.

There flows the tawny Tiber;
 Break their wings and throw them in,
 For since they will not eat why let them drink.

With shouts of derision HYPOKRATES is pushed out. NARCISSA obtains a sword from SEXTUS.

And throw the rascal in to keep them company;
 For thus I cast away all supernatural aids!

2424

I fear no more the gods!
 The world is mine!

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

107

NARCISSA.

2426

Then Casca, ruling all, be merciful.

He pushes her roughly away. She stabs him as he turns to light the fire. His sword being in his hand he kills her, and at his motion the soldiers carry her body out, lower left. The torch, fallen from his hand, has gone out. He stands as if uninjured.

TACITUS.

She loved thee once, she loved thee Casca, once.

CASCA reels slightly.

SEXTUS.

Oh Varro! Varro! friend, complete the work!

CASCA recovers himself and a silence ensues. He reels and falls to his knees but rises with the extinguished torch in his hands, having dropped his sword.

CASCA.

A torch! a torch!

He sees that none can be had.

A torch! no! no!

Not all the gods shall choke me down!

Blood issues from his mouth. He stabs at TITUS with the torch but VARRO thrusts him through from the side and his partisans rush on his sinking form and kill him.

A GENERAL CRY.

2431

Titus! Titus Augustus! Emperor!

The cry is repeated in the street. The ropes are cut. LUCIA embraces LIVIA. TITUS advances and stills them with a gesture.

108 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

The accefsion of Titus Flavius Sabinus Vefpafianus.

Since it hath pleased the gods to call us on
 The scene again, our duty now shall best be done,
 By coaxing back the frightened wings of peace,
 With every means that shall expedient seem:
 Another bosom, Trajan, should be searched. *A soldier examines CASCAS dress.*
 Take up the dead; show honors to them both;
 The one deserves the plaudits of the world,
 And poorly will they pay him for his sacrifice;
 The other needs whatever shows in charity
 May be accorded him. Recover all the dead,
 Who in this needless hour have been mowed down;
 With garlands deck the woman just now carried off.
 Recover, too, the body of an infant borne upon a spear.
 Have messengers sent out to overtake the news,
 Lest all the country be in tumult thrown;
 Recall our brother, praising his economy and thrift.
 To warn all men against the evils of unchecked ambition,
 We shall think it best, in justice to the state,
 To utterly destroy the last of these disturbing elements
 Who sought to rise upon her desolation,
 Who would thriftily have followed in the wake of ruin,
 Fattening on misfortune and distress.
 And therefore, in the name of lasting peace,
 To sink the admonition deep, proceed now
 To the consummation of our disregarded orders,
 Adding to imprisonment, the immediate execution
 Of these known and listed traitors, further,
 Confiscate their properties and add their monies
 To the public treasury, impoverish
 Their sons and daughters so that no descendant,
 Puffed with wealth and idleness,
 Shall e'er be tempted to avenge this proper sentence.
 Execute them all!

He strikes the paper which TRAJAN has had the soldier take from CASCAS breast. The mob disperses and the soldiers, under the command of SEXTUS and VARRO retire in order. TITUS and the others move away, except LUCIA, who goes out, lower left. LIVIA is left alone.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

109

JUVENAL.

The empress, sire!

TITUS.

2466

We have no empress, Juvenal,
We take our place upon the throne, unhonored by a wife.

LIVIA.

Now Titus is my heart made sick,
I love you still, my love hath never lessened
Since the fortunate hour your unexpected presence
Waked my heart to happiness immeasurable.
Forget, my husband, these quick, hateful words,
Hot sprung from jealous doubt and anger;
Take me in thy arms again.

TITUS.

Let Pliny's name be added to the list.

TITUS writes PLINY'S name upon the list with his finger moistened in the blood stains of the parchment. Exeunt all, upper right, except LIVIA.

LIVIA.

2476

No wrong! no wrong! I've ever done
To suffer such dishonor.
Nothing! nothing! rests against my soul,
To justify the shame,
Which in his wilful anger now he casts upon my love.
Yea Casca, thou I should have listened to;
The Hebrew woman hath returned at last.

After a silence LUCIA enters, lower left.

LUCIA.

I've brought you Numa's gown.

LIVIA.

Take me to the place!

LUCIA.

There's nothing left to see;
The dogs have torn his little body---

LIVIA.

2487

Lucia! Lucia! come!

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The guards are stationed in the halls;
They will not let you out.

LIVIA.

Come! come!

A guard momentarily appears, lower left.

2491 A prison, now! Oh Numa! Numa! Numa.

She sinks down on the stone seat of the impluvium. LUCIA takes off a white robe and throws it over her. She rises and draws it about herself. She picks at the hem of NUMA'S garment and her mind wanders.

A pretty hem, the little flowers scatter here and there. Reward the girl. I'll have another gown embroidered soon if this one pleases him. I see his precious fingers pulling at the blossoms. Are you sure the colors will not fade? He'll have it in his mouth, you know.

She takes the robe in her arms.

How light you are! You should be growing fat; these chilly days were never meant for thee; bright sunshine, warm and strengthening will suit thee best. Asleep, asleep my little one, oh lie thee here while mother watches for.....thy sleeve!.... Thy gown is bloodstained!... Lucia! look! the sleeve is gone.

She has spread the garment upon the couch at the left of the impluvium. She clutches at the white gown, but it has fallen from her shoulders as she has risen on the discovery of the bloodstains. At the sight of the black dress her reason returns.

He's dead! he's dead! he's dead!

And this is all they've left me, Numa, Numa.

Go, go! Lucia! go, bring back a witness of the deed.

His father's men are searching for him now.

Exit LUCIA, middle left. Presently enter HYPOKRATES, dripping, lower left.

Hypokrates, you saw the deed.

HYPOKRATES.

The deed?

LIVIA.

The infant's death.

HYPOKRATES.

2509

Ah yes.

LIVIA.

The dogs!

HYPOKRATES.

The form was rescued by a clownish knave,

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

iii

And tossed into the Tiber after me;
With me it sank, but me the gods preserved.

LIVIA.

2515 A useful purpose you will answer still;
I have an enemy beyond my strength,
And you have mortal poison.

HYPOKRATES.

No, not I, for that's against the statute;
But, I have a little powder ring,
Though not a poison.

LIVIA.

Yet, 't will do,

HYPOKRATES.

'Tis nothing but a sleeping potion, lady.

LIVIA.

Sleep they long?

HYPOKRATES.

At times, they do; an hour, a day, a month,
A year, a century; according to the dose.
2525 Shall we exchange our rings?

LIVIA.

How much is here?

HYPOKRATES.

About three hundred years, I think,
Perhaps a little more.

LIVIA.

Well met.

HYPOKRATES.

And well imbursed.

LIVIA.

Have you a remedy for this?

HYPOKRATES.

2532 I might procure one for you.

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LIVIA.

No! do not! I want relief cut off;
Procure the remedy for no one! here!

*She gives him
another ring.*

HYPOKRATES.

It shall be so, I serve my clients with an honor
2536 Even Pliny well might envy me.

*He goes down right. LUCIA and
TRANQUILLIUS enter, middle left.*

LUCIA.

Tranquillius saw thy Numa rescued from the dogs,
And carried off by some rough fellow in plebian garb.

LIVIA.

Go tell the emperor.

*Exit TRANQUILLIUS, middle right. LUCIA looks from LIVIA
to HYPOKRATES. LIVIA, searching, presently picks up a horn
and filling it with water at the impluvium, she retires to the stylo-
bate.*

LUCIA.

Hypokrates, she hath thy poison, thou her ring.
Tranquillius, return!

*She catches HYPOKRATES by the
arm and TRANQUILLIUS reenters.*

2542 Hypokrates hath sold the empress poison;
In her grief she will destroy herself.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Pestiferous astrologer!

HYPOKRATES.

'Twas not a poison,
Nothing more than just a bringer of sweet, restful sleep.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Our ears have heard strange stories of thy sleeping potions;
Thou shalt stand convicted when I crook my finger, sir.

HYPOKRATES.

A simple sleeping-drug.

TRANQUILLIUS.

2550 A sleep that knows no ending;
I can see the prison gates swing ope their massive jaws for thee.

HYPOKRATES.

I have a remedy. Now let me go. The pungent odor of this root will drive away a sleep brought on by drugs. I thought to bring her back to life myself and gain the credit of the prodigy, but you shall do it for me, gentle sir. *Exit, lower right.*

TRANQUILLIUS.

He smells the root and displays great repugnance.

I can not blame poor Death for making off when he smells this.

He catches LUCIA around the waist and forces her to smell the root. He kisses her.

LUCIA.

She comes! we'll hide and when she falls asleep we'll waken her.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Ah no! we'll let her sleep awhile,

For when she wakes and finds her purpose foiled,

2560 She'll take some surer means.

Events must dictate our responsibility.

LUCIA.

But do **not** wait too long.

TRANQUILLIUS.

The proper hour shall be the proper time.

LUCIA.

But if it does not work?

Perhaps the root hath not the power to overcome the drug

TRANQUILLIUS.

We have his word.

LUCIA

He feared arrest.

TRANQUILLIUS.

He lied! he lied! he gave us this that he might get away!

The empress we can not awake.

LUCIA.

2570

We must prevent----

TRANQUILLIUS.

Too late! she's drained the cup.

Catching her.

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LUCIA

Then let us get the emperor's physicians.

TRANQUILLIUS.

If we do and they revive her she will find another way.

LUCIA.

He may have spoke the truth; the odor may awaken her.

TRANQUILLIUS.

2575

Yea! methinks it will.

He smells it again.

LUCIA.

Ah no! her face is white.

TRANQUILLIUS.

I have not told the emperor yet.

*Exeunt both,
upper right.*

LIVIA.

It is the end.

The pleasures I have known are gone,

The happy hours have trooped away,

And sombre griefs and bitter miseries consume the day.

I go to meet the ones I love.

Her hand trembles.

It works! It works! I see as in a dream.

The night is falling; Titus! Titus.

*She sinks down
on the couch.*

Happy were we once, oh come again, again.

*She rises with great effort and weakly strikes the jar three times
with the horn clutched in her hand. She falls back upon the
couch. Enter JUVENAL, TRANQUILLIUS and LUCIA, up-
per right.*

JUVENAL.

She hath destroyed herself!

LUCIA puts her robe over LIVIA. TRAJAN enters, upper right.

TRAJAN.

2587

The emperor sits without a wife indeed.

Enter TITUS, TACITUS, JULIA and PLOTINA, upper right.

TITUS.

Who struck the jar? We heard it ring. Our wife!

JUVENAL.

Thy wife is dead.

JULIA and PLOTINA stand at the head of the couch, weeping.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

115

TITUS.

How came she to her death?

JUVENAL.

2591 She hath the look of poison, sire.

TRAJAN.

I saw Hypokrates----

TITUS.

Go bring him here!

TRANQUILLIUS.

He's there.

Exit TRAJAN, lower right.

TITUS.

Though we regret her death,
The circumstances move us to the utterance,
That she hath nobly answered for ignoble practices;
We pity her but she hath merited her woe.

HYPOKRATES and TRAJAN reenter.

TACITUS.

Astrologer, here lies the evidence of thy unlawful traffic!

HYPOKRATES.

2600 It was not a mortal drug I sold!
She said she had an enemy.

I have a cure!

He searches.

I have it not, but I can get it, sir!

TRAJAN.

I will accompany you.

HYPOKRATES.

'Tis utterly impossible
For me to get the remedy unless I am alone.

TACITUS.

Then go alone.

TRAJAN.

2608 This is a trick of his to slip away.

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TITUS.

We rest upon his honor; go.

TRANQUILLIUS.

Aside, to HYPOKRATES.

The emperor desired her death;
Escape, and come not back.

TRAJAN.

2612 Hypokrates, obtain the remedy,
Or mix thyself a fatal drug, if you like not a sword.
Exit HYPOKRATES, lower right, shivering.

TITUS.

Inter the woman privately.

TACITUS.

Unnatural man!

JUVENAL.

You flout the living and insult the dead.

TRAJAN.

With this abuse of power shall you inaugurate your reign?

TITUS.

2618 Sirs!

JUVENAL.

Though men may still before your anger,
Yet among themselves your actions will they narrowly examine.

TITUS.

All I ask is justice from the tongues of men.
By secret obsequies I would preserve her
From the shameful reputation of her life.

TACITUS.

It was yourself who took her from the temple.

TITUS.

2626 Yea! and it was your good friend
Who took her from the palace.

JUVENAL.

This is why the name of Pliny stands

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

117

In bloody characters upon the list.

TACITUS.

A baseless accusation.

JUVENAL.

Pliny's name hath never yet been touched by scandal.

TRAJAN.

Pliny took the forum when the mob in lust and anger stormed;

His voice in your defence above the tumult rose,
2633 He stood against the multitude,
He whipped them back to silence,
Cowed their rising fury,
And his eloquence, his great authority prevailed;
His arm upheld the tottering state.

Enter SEXTUS and PLINY, lower left.

SEXTUS.

The noble conduct of this prisoner,
His loyalty and reputation
Have prevailed upon me thus to bring him here,
Before he goes to prison, sire.

PLINY.

2642 The empress, dead!

TACITUS.

Yea. Titus hath accused her of unfaithfulness,
And thus she answers him.

PLINY perceives that he is thought guilty

PLINY.

Am I the man?

Unjust and violent decree!
How shalt thou e're repair this injury?
Upon what evidence have you proceeded to this monstrous end?

TITUS.

Sufficient for myself.

TACITUS.

2650 Produce thy evidence!

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PLINY.

We quarrel in the presence of the dead.

The soldiers remove the couch with LIVIA'S form. Exeunt LUCIA, PLOTINA, JULIA and SEXTUS, upper right.

TITUS.

She plotted with her brother and thyself.
She fled to thee when Casca was prepared to take our life.

TACITUS.

Infatuated man, her brother thought
To gain the favor of the gods by sacrificing her;
2656 He told her you loved Berenice,
 Thus to get her from the palace.

TITUS.

But she fled to Pliny's house.

JUVENAL.

Because Gaudentius was his guest;
Two days before, and I should now be taken prisoner
For I have had the man with me:
With confidence he moved along
The difficult and envious pathway of his art.

TITUS.

Gaudentius was your guest?

PLINY.

His instruments are there, his children, too.

TITUS.

2666 They shall be sons of Rome.

TACITUS.

Then this is all thy evidence.
She had no thought of Pliny when she went to Pliny's house.

TITUS.

Her Christian declaration----

JUVENAL.

Was a falsehood,
Prompted by the scheming Auius in the hope

2672

That Casca in his sacrificial fury
Would encounter your authority.
They poisoned Livia's mind,
They told her you had sentenced her to death,
That only by this subterfuge could she escape;
And Casca showed her this.

TITUS.

In Berenice's hand!
An order for her death; the signature my own!
Accurséd Casca; lost! lost! lost!
O'ertake Hypokrates!
Oh any treasure if he finds the remedy!
TITUS moves upper right, but stops. TRANQUILLIUS, at the top of his speed, runs across from the left and leaping the stylobate disappears, upper right. TRAJAN goes out hurriedly, lower right.
No! no! I'm sure she was not guiltless, no!
You sympathize with her and hope to clear your friend.
Her brother, though he wished to sacrifice her,
Why should he dishonor her?
'Tis hateful to suppose him base without a reason.

PLINY.

2688

A weighty reason moved him, sire;
He thought to bring my death about,
To strike at me with your despair,
For I had threatened to disclose his schemes to you;
If he proceeded with them, which I would have done
Had he not acted on the impulse of the moment.
This conspiracy was organized by Aulus;
Casca, through a chance, took up the work
Where Aulus laid it down; his own conspiracy,
In greater caution planned he never carried through.

JUVENAL.

And never will.

TITUS.

2700

Yea! yea! you seem to be as full of truth as he;
I think you are as false.

TACITUS.

Conviction is upon you for

120 The IMPERIAL AUTHORITY

You know we speak the truth;
No longer can you justify your harshness
With the certainty of guilt;
Admit responsibility, endure remorse,
2706 And seek to raise no barrier of suspicion up,
To hide away from poignant sorrow and disquietude.

TITUS.

No! no! for you yourself did copy his incriminating speech,
And when you read the lines to us and reached
The dangerous phrase, in friendship you refused the rest.

TACITUS.

Is this the last? With this shall your suspicions end?
Read then, you know the art.

TACITUS takes the tablet from the ledge and TITUS reads it.

TITUS.

"Oh! Casca, look! Oh, look where Livia comes!
The charm of dignity in every movement lies,
She hath the fascination of immortal loveliness.
How like a gentle breath she moves along the corridor.
2717 How like a dream her presence makes
The cold and gloomy hallways of this palace seem.
She, Casca, is thy sister"----

TACITUS.

There I stopped.

TITUS.

"She, Casca, is thy sister,
Hers the eyes to blind with tears and burn,
And hers the voice to choke with grief,
And hers the heart to crush beneath thy ruthless heel,
When thou shalt kill Vespasian on his throne,
And lay the noble Titus in his undeservéd tomb!"

TACITUS.

2727 I stopped, to save him from disgrace and ruin;
Peace, I thought, would best be served by silence.

of TITUS FLAVIUS.

121

PLINY.

We expected to dissuade him from his fateful course.

TITUS.

Your hopes and expectations feebly stood
Against this devastating storm.

TACITUS.

2732 Its fury now is past.

TITUS.

Its havoc wrought!
And reparation shall not build these ruins up again,
Nor shall remorse bring back the dead.

TACITUS and JUVENAL, standing on the right, grasp TITUS' hand and walk apart. TITUS extends his hand to PLINY, who then joins TACITUS and JUVENAL, upper left. TITUS is facing the right and does not notice that they have moved away. He reads the tablet again.

"Oh! Casca, look! Oh, look where Livia comes!

Unseen by TITUS, LIVIA appears, upper right. LUCIA is with her and TRANQUILLIUS closely follows them.

The charm of dignity in every movement lies,
She hath the fascination of immortal loveliness.
How like a gentle breath she moves along the corridor.
How like a dream her presence makes

LIVIA reaches the right side of the impluvium.

The cold and gloomy hallways of this palace seem.

With the first line he looks up.

2742 lynes.*

Oh look where Livia comes.

They embrace.

TRANQUILLIUS, at the left of the impluvium, discovers on the floor the cake which he has coveted and brushing it off, he goes to LUCIA, embraces her and gives her a portion of it. The others observe the groups from the stylobate.

(CURTAIN.)

*These 2742 lynes contain as many syllables as are contained in 2616 lynes of the classical iambic pentametre.

THE CONCLUSION.

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